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FAITH

A Manual of Keswick Teaching

By

HANDLEY C. G. MOULE, D.D.

Bishop of Durham

HUBERT BROOKE, M.A.

J. ELDER CUMMING, D.D.

F. B. MEYER, B.A.

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1904



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PREFATORY NOTE

THE aim of this volume is to give very plain instruction in the doctrine of Holiness by Faith, its Scriptural basis, and its application in daily life. The subject is so intimately associated with the work of the Keswick Convention, and is here so characteristically treated by four of the most trusted leaders of the gathering, that no apology is needed for associating the book with Keswick. The contributors to the volume, while in full general agreement, are of course not severally pledged to every detail of statement in the chapters not their own.

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<i>Bishop of Durham</i>	

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Holiness by Faith

BY THE
BISHOP OF DURHAM

I

HOLINESS BY FAITH

IN this brief chapter no one will expect to find a complete treatment, complete even as an outline, of the great words at its head. I shall attempt little more than some remarks upon main aspects of the sacred matter in hand, involving at one point some personal incidents.. The best result will be secured if these animate the reader to enter afresh on a Biblical study for himself, and to live out the results of that study with new decision and hope.

Always, more or less, along the course of the Christian ages, the longing of the soul after 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord,' has been manifestly present in the Church. It could not but be thus, so far as, even by tradition or in other secondary ways, the spiritual

message of the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles was remembered, and the power of the example and teaching of the Lord Himself was at all consciously felt. Much more would it tend to be so when, as in the first ages of the Church, and again in these latter centuries, the Book of God has been widely kept 'in evidence' as being, for all believers, in the memorable words of Gregory the Great, 'the heart of God in the words of God,' 'the letter of the heavenly Emperor to His subjects.' For the whole *envoi* of the divine Book, in its history, its devotions, its prophecy, and its doctrine, may be summed up in one sentence: 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.' The appeal of the Bible for holiness is conveyed in countless articulate messages and precepts; but by no means in them alone. It breathes from its histories of judgment and mercy. It is the occasion of its profound and heart-shaking teaching about the sin of man. It comes to us with a divine eloquence through the simple contemplation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in

His Person and action. It radiates to us from the morning star of the hope of His Return.

Some shrewd American, characteristically, has said of the Bible that it is such that, dig in it where you will, you are sure to find '*Do right!*' at the bottom of the shaft. Let us lift the thought, or at least its expression, still higher, putting it into the directest possible contact with the will of God in Christ; and we may truly say that at the depth of every believing inquiry into the mind of that mysterious Volume will be found, shining and glorious, the golden commandment, 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.'

In particular, we may take note that this will be the case where the Bible-student has 'dug his shaft' on the ground covered by the truths of our justification. That is a fair ground indeed, and a large one. Nothing is more profoundly and peculiarly *distinctive* of the very Gospel of Christ than the message of our justification for His sake, our

‘peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,’ ‘our redemption in His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.’ This is not, as we shall see, the ultimate message; that message is our holiness. But it is emphatically a distinctive message. For it is the Gospel alone which undertakes, with the least semblance of validity, to answer the awful question, awful indeed to the awakened conscience, How shall man be just with God? That is to say, taking the terms into Biblical light, How shall He, Who is Himself the eternal moral order in person, not only condone but welcome with a close and eternal embrace His creature who has broken that order, and stands before Him as the guilty being that he is? Here is a question infinitely different from the question, How shall one sinner forgive another? This has a very short and simple answer ready. But to solve that other question there needed the whole marvel of the Incarnation and the Cross. It had to be met and satisfied by an immeasurable propitiation, presented to

that violated Holiness, by One Who is at once one with it and one with us. It demanded the Son of God made Man, and the Agony and bloody Sweat, the Cross and Passion ; the ‘Not My will but Thine be done’ ; the ‘Why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ Measured only by that Sacrifice is the greatness of our need as guilty. Measured by it only is the acceptance, in Christ, by faith, of His true members.

Well, but ‘what shall we say then?’ With ‘CHRIST FOR US’ thus full in view, and our more than forgiveness for His sake, what shall we say? ‘Shall we continue in sin?’ Shall we accept our liberty from the death sentence, and walk away—to sin? ‘God forbid.’ From two sides of the Biblical truth of our justification sounds the immortal command, ‘Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.’ First, the mode of our rescue and release is such as to lay upon us an immeasurable and inexhaustible obligation, a bond of grateful love, to the Rescuer and Deliverer ; and He is Holy :

‘Holiest of Holies, Jesus Christ our Lord.’

Then further, our rescue and release by Him from 'the curse of the law,' what is it, from another side? It is, in the strictest sense, a sublime *purchase* of our very being to be the property of the Lord, Who died for us and rose again. He saved us, not to dismiss us into that dire liberty from Him which St. Paul calls 'freedom from righteousness,' and which preludes the eternal imprisonment of the lost soul. He saved us—to annex us. 'He gave Himself for us—to buy us out from all iniquity, and to purify to Himself a people of *His own possession*, zealous of good works.' We are the bought property of our Saviour, bought altogether for His ends. And He is

'Holiest of Holies, Jesus Christ our Lord.'

When we have made a purchase we expect *to have the thing*. He Who purchased us at the cost of His most sacred Self, sacrificed on Golgotha, expects to have the thing. So, let the justified ever hear that voice springing from the very heart of their peace with God: 'Ye shall be

holy, for I am holy.' He, the Holy One, is not our Maker only, nor again only our Example, or only our Teacher. He is our Purchaser, our Possessor ; we are absolutely His, by rights as tender, but also as absolute, as it is possible to conceive.

It is then no wonder that the 'Gospel of free salvation,' the more deeply it is pondered and apprehended, should tend to generate within its mighty field of influence a special thirst for holiness of heart. This was strikingly apparent in Protestant Christendom (to speak now of it only) in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. No man ever more energetically taught the spiritual bond between justification and holiness than Luther. But his great message of pardon and peace was not always thus treated by his later followers. So there needed the deep Pietist movement of the seventeenth century, arising in the heart of Lutheranism, and asserting on a noble scale the truth that the fully pardoned *must* long to be fully holy. Then in England, a hundred

and fifty years ago, came the Methodist movement (I use the word Methodist in its largest sense). Its earliest message was the grandeur and freedom of pardon, for Christ's sake, for the believing sinner. But then, out of the depth of that message, sprung an intense desire to be 'holy, as He is holy.' It did not always take the same line, or speak the same phrase ; far from it. A Wesley and a Fletcher differed, often in gravest controversy, from a Venn and a Romaine. In my own view those first two great teachers went, in some things, beyond 'what was written,' taking one vast side of truth too nearly as the whole. But a profound oneness of desire and longing underlay all the true leaders' varying theories ; the thirst to be 'holy, as He is holy,' to 'purify ourselves, even as He is pure,' to find in experience nothing short, under whatever conditions, of a '*victory*' and a '*triumph*,' (in the words of the English Office of Baptism) 'against the devil, the world, and the flesh.' And glorious were the living illustrations of that possibility in the saints of God of

that great and fruitful day, on all sides of the controversy.

In the century just closed we have seen some important similar phenomena in English religion. Within circles commonly named Evangelical, alike within and without the national Church, there has arisen, particularly within the final quarter of the century, more than one movement which, taking its origin where Justification by Faith was the main watchword, has asserted the supreme call in the justified to real and positive holiness.

I may be allowed here to deal with one of these movements only—that which has long been labelled by its local association with Keswick, in Cumberland. In that small town, by the side of the fairest of mountain lakes, now for some twenty-eight years, meetings have been held annually, attended by members of various communions and of several nationalities, for the express purpose of promoting, by scriptural exposition, spiritual addresses, mutual conference, and the fellowship of prayer and praise, the personal holiness of Christian

disciples. For many years the meetings, originated on a small scale, have numbered their attendants by some thousands, the large majority of whom spend at least a week together. From this central hearth has spread widely the usage of similar gatherings, longer or shorter in duration, in England and in other countries.

And it is not too much to say that the diffused and impalpable influence of the Keswick movement has long been felt far beyond the circles which have any definite connexion with it, or which are in complete accord with all its methods or usages. To name one important direction, the mission-field, so far at least as it is worked by Evangelical enterprise, has deeply felt the touch of Keswick. The Church Missionary Society, for example, has on its roll a great number of devoted missionaries, men and women, who have undoubtedly been led to their self-consecration for labour in 'the regions beyond' by impulses derived, under God, directly or indirectly from Keswick. And at home, unless we are greatly mistaken,

there are a host of pulpits from which the message of the holy life, not only as to the duty of it, but as to the hope and secret of realization, is delivered in power and love, which have felt the same impulse, though perhaps through quite circuitous means. This is often so where the great 'Convention' itself has never been heard of, and sometimes even where it is itself regarded with a certain misgiving.

The origin of the Keswick meetings is interesting and suggestive. In 1874 the devout and admirable vicar of St. John's Church, Keswick, the late Canon T. D. Harford Battersby, received a manifest new gift of spiritual power. For long years he had not only laboured for God, but had shone with a noble light of example as pastor in parish and leader in all good works. Gradually, and at length with calm conviction, he had arrived at the great evangelical tenet of Justification by Faith. Yet a sense of tiring friction and restraint attended his own spiritual life. With some distrust, he attended a remarkable 'Convention' held at Oxford, in the

summer of 1874. There, among other addresses and expositions, the incident of the nobleman at Cana was unfolded. It was shown that faith, in the nobleman's experience, acted under two successive aspects. First, it carried the man from Capernaum up the hills to Cana, seeking for the Lord. Then, when he had got the Lord's word of power, His mere assertion that the longed-for boon was given, faith carried him down from Cana to Capernaum resting on the Lord. 'He believed the word that Jesus had spoken, and he *went his way*.' He did not remain in the suppliant attitude, imploring, wrestling, longing, hoping, doubting. He went his way at rest, carrying a possession not only sought, but received, by a reliance deep as the soul.

To Canon Battersby the Oxford meetings were the epoch of a practically new inward life. No tumult of revolutionary thought or practice followed. Not one conviction of the past appears to have been disturbed. Most assuredly he was never tempted off the sure apostolic ground

of peace and acceptance, 'CHRIST FOR US.' From the first to the very last he rested there. The atoning Blood, the justifying Righteousness, always needed, were always his 'hiding-place.' He never, that we have the least intimation, hesitated to own himself unworthy, sinful, before the eternal Purity. He most surely would never hesitate to say, 'Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord.' No ; to the end this saintly soul, in that respect, 'grew downward.' But then, so he humbly and persistently affirmed, while his life of tranquilly radiant peace and strength verified the affirmation, the old friction and bondage of his inner world were displaced by a wonderful repose and liberty. As regarded the relation of his will towards the will of God, he found himself able, in a profound sense, to meet the most trying hours 'not with a sigh but with a song.' As regarded the experiences of temptation, he was indeed conscious of the tempter and his 'devices,' and of the 'weakness of the mortal nature,' not yet finally delivered, still shaken and strained

in the Fall. Nevertheless, temptation was now no longer over the disciple's head, but beneath his feet, while he relied, in the simplicity of surrendering faith, upon the Lord Who 'dwelt in his heart.' He was 'more than conqueror, through Him that loved him.'

Could we have questioned Mr. Battersby at all in detail upon the distinctive points of his spiritual creed, we should have found him, if I mistake not, answering somewhat as follows upon the whole.

The novelty of his experience lay not in any displacement of fundamental truth. It lay in the discovery, indistinctly apprehended before, now consciously and deliberately attained, of the power of faith, of personal reliance, in the matter of purity and liberty within. He discovered, what all the while the Lord and the Apostles had been saying, and what lay implied in all the records of the saints, even saints who would not have *phrased* their experience so, that the Christian overcomes the tempter, in the deep secret of the matter, *only* by calling on Him Who overcame the tempter

for us. The escape from evil, at the centre, in the depth, at 'the first springs of thought and will,' is reached only so. 'Not I, but Christ liveth in me.' The words are no mere rhapsody. Faith welcomes (Eph. iii. 17) the Lord Himself, in an immediate spiritual presence, to reside and, of course, to reign in the heart. And faith commits to that divine Resident the management of the troubled inner world.

Thus, looking at the rule and habit of life, this Christian man, not less diligent, humble, watchful, prayerful than before, now, in a way and measure not fully known before, met temptation with the supreme antidote of CHRIST. His instinct was now, when the evil presented itself, whatever it might be, not so much to struggle with it as to take refuge from it in Christ; not to deal with it by himself, but to 'give himself over to be managed by his Lord.' And great, veritable, blissful, was the difference which came thus into his inner man; so he humbly said—so men saw that it was, as

they watched him in all the relations of human life.

The eternal Christ, the same yesterday and for ever, the 'same Jesus' on Whom he rested, now as always, for his acceptance, was now also consciously his profound secret and repose for moral deliverance, for freedom within, for purity of purpose, even the purpose of unselfish love towards God and towards man. The ancient secret, faith, was employed in a direction so far novel that it had been comparatively neglected, while yet, when he came to think upon it with his new insight, it was a direction clearly indicated by the whole drift of the Biblical revelation upon holiness.

He would have repudiated with deep earnestness the suggestion that such a programme of inward sanctity must leave the Christian adrift as to spiritual diligence, the use of means, self-disciplining care in habits and conduct. Exactly the opposite would be his conclusion. For one thing, it was now more than ever not only necessary to use the means of grace, the

Holy Scriptures, the labour of prayer, the divine feast of the Sacramental Table, but (in a special sense) *delightful* to do so. For their manifest and most powerful effect is to 'keep the soul awake' to the supreme facts of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of our possessions in the Lord ; yea, as to the Scripture and the Sacrament, it is their function to 'convey' those possessions ever anew to our grasp and fruition by divine Word and divine Seal. And therefore, precisely on purpose that the inmost man may the more confidently, the more instantaneously, the more fully, use Christ Himself, by mere faith, for life and liberty, the disciple will cherish 'the means.' He will love them all the more because of a grown perception, in the light of Christ, of their true office ; while yet he will not allow even them to becloud the central fact, which rather they protect and enshrine, that the Christian's spirit, in immediate contact, is evermore to use the ever-present Christ as his purity and power.

All that deepens our union with Him

is doubly precious when, in the interior of all, behind the most sacred of ordinances, within the golden wall which guards the well of life, the spirit uses, 'at all times and in all places,' Him Who is our Life, in His absolute personal proximity, as our Liberator, our Keeper, our Peace, our All.

It is almost needless to say that Canon Battersby would have laid supreme emphasis, from another side, upon the connexion between the faith which receives and the surrender which presents. To a Christ wholly trusted, the soul, which sees Him in His truth and glory, wholly 'presents itself, as alive from the dead.' The man, resting in faith, 'rests not day nor night' from the sacred servitude of his Deliverer. On the other hand, his experience of that servitude, or rather of Him Whom in it he serves, powerfully quickens the action of faith in every direction, because it continually brings home a fresh consciousness of the greatness of faith's Object.

Somewhat thus I have ventured to

sketch in faint outline the main traits of the spiritual creed of a great, while most humble, Christian man. Many details of extreme importance might have been stated and discussed. But it seemed better to leave these to treatises more expressly dogmatic. If I have fairly illustrated in the instance of a Harford Battersby what 'Holiness through Faith' means, and what it does not mean, it will have been enough for my purpose.

For Canon Battersby, the 'discovery' of 1874 was, as we have said, an epoch indeed. And what he had found he set himself to convey to others. He called around him, with a few like-minded friends, a small annual gathering in his vicarage field at Keswick. The message of those meetings met in a strange way the thirst and hunger of more hearts, and of yet more. And the 'Convention,' now so great in its scale, and so wide in its range of influence, grew by degrees from that modest beginning.

May its work be ever deepened, and ever purified, as the years move. May the

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Lord of Holiness preserve it, and all that it represents, from the fatal fallacies of self-righteousness, of self-reliance, of self-advertisement. Yet more, may the Christian Church at large learn always more deeply, by whatever means, at her Lord's feet, the true lessons of Christian Holiness. May she, in her sons and daughters, know no justifying righteousness but His merits, no secret of inward purity, liberty, and power, but Himself, by His Spirit, dwelling in the heart by faith. And may her one ambition be His glory, sought in a life of consecrated service, whose double watchword is that 'Christ for us is all our peace before a holy God, and Christ in us is all our strength in an unholy world.'

Christian Holiness and the Conflict with Temptation

BY THE

REV. F. B. MEYER, B.A.

II

CHRISTIAN HOLINESS AND THE CONFLICT WITH TEMPTATION

WHAT evil is in its essence, we cannot tell. We know it in its results, but whether it is positive or privative, whether it is a necessary possibility to moral existence or not, our data are too few to enable us to decide.

Evil is ubiquitous in this world; but how far it extends beyond this world is again hidden from us. But it is impossible to take our Lord's words literally, without being compelled to admit that He believed in a great kingdom of evil spirits, who owned the leadership and rule of a strong and malign spirit, known as the Devil (the javelin-thrower) or Satan.

When our Lord prepared the Disciples' Prayer, which He knew would be uttered

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far down the ages by the holiest, saintliest, and noblest of the sons of men, He taught them to ask to be delivered from evil, as often as they asked for daily bread. He was not an amiable optimist, Who passed through our world, ignoring the malign presence of evil in the hearts of men. *We* know the power of evil, because we are mastered by it. *He* knew the power of evil, because He encountered it and overthrew it. He was able, therefore, to judge its measureless force as we cannot. The tree that yields to the blast cannot gauge its strength, like the rock that stands obdurately and relentlessly against it ; and therefore Jesus Christ, who stood four-square against the blast of evil—not within, but around, and from without—must have been able to estimate it as no one has ever done beside ; and He knew that there was evil in the best. Did you ever think of the wonderful parable of the tares ? Man looks at this one fellow man and says, ‘ He is all wheat,’ or he looks at another and says, ‘ He is all tares ’ ; but the Master tells us that in every wheatfield there are

tares. They are inevitable, He says ; and His estimate has proved universally correct. The saints are only saved sinners. The best of them, like Augustine, must write books of confession. The holiest are most conscious of their shortcoming, and need to say : ‘ Deliver us from evils of which we are deeply sensible, which our fellow men may not discern, but which seem more and more intolerable.’

Evil is not in man by the decree and will of God. We are instructed to ask ‘ Our Father ’ to deliver us. Evidently, then, God Himself would not be the author of it. He has permitted evil in the world, but it has come in apart from Him—‘ an enemy hath done this.’ Probably we shall never in this world understand why evil was permitted to enter ; but sometimes it seems that the solution will be along this line—that the goodness of heaven is not the innocence of a child, but the purity of those who have come through the fight, and have attained a virtue which had not been possible except

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by the choice of the will. The goodness of the saints must be goodness which has been tempted and tried ; but if the human will shall have the option of selecting the good, there must be evil to reject ; if it choose the light, there must be the darkness from which it flees ; if there is the better, there must be the worse. It seems impossible that there could be a world of moral beings who love God for Himself, unless they might have chosen against Him.

Evil is not, however, a necessary part of our nature. We could not ask God the Father to deliver us from it, if it were an inalienable part and parcel of our being. It must be distinguishable from ourselves, just as small-pox is distinguishable from the flesh of a little child. We, of course, have never known what it is to be without the pressure and presence of evil ; but, thank God, when we are mastered by its assault, we can look steadily at it and say, ‘Thou art a parasite, a disease ; and the time will come, as certain as God is good, when we shall

be delivered, and our flesh will come to us 'as the flesh of a little child.'

We can never deliver ourselves, but we may count on God to deliver us. We have striven, have wept hot tears, have scourged ourselves, have vowed never again to fall, but repeatedly the horrid thing which we detest has wrapped its octopus arms around us, and dragged us down to the muddy depths, where all our fair white vesture has been stained. If it were left to us to save ourselves from it, we might despair, but the very fact that Jesus tells us to ask the Father to deliver, proves that deep down in the heart of God there is the resolve to deliver. He offers an assurance that the patience of God will achieve what we have failed to effect. Hence, when you yield to sin ; when that word is spoken you would have given anything never to have said ; when that rapier thrust is administered, and your friend is smarting from it, and you would have sacrificed anything to have kept the sword in its scabbard ; when those evil thoughts have been entertained that ought

to have been resisted,—do not let your heart break in despair, but look up into the face of God, saying, ‘Father, I hate this evil thing, but not I only, *Thou* hatest it also, and Thou takest my part against it. I do not hide nor cloke it from Thine eyes. The tares are scattered through the soil. Something in me responds to the temptation from without. There is a bias, a tendency, a gravitation downwards. The atmosphere of my soul is charged with evil forces that a spark may ignite into an explosion of passion. Deliver, deliver me.’

Then God rides upon a cherub and comes near, saying, ‘Child, I love thee ; I have made, and I will bear ; I have redeemed thee with the Blood of My Son, and thou art inexpressibly dear : I can never renounce My task until that day shall dawn, when thy face shall shine as the sun, thy garments be white as the light, and upon the placid lake of thine heart no cloud shall be reflected, but only the blue sky of My purity and love.

Let us cherish that ideal, and always

keep it before our faces. If we fall, let us fall with our faces towards it. He Who has begun a good work in us, will carry it to completion. He will perfect that which concerneth us, and satisfy the hungry soul with righteousness.

The first step towards this emancipation is to teach us how to deal with temptation.

* * * * *

Temptation is inevitable to us all : to the poor, who are tempted to murmur ; to the rich, who are tempted to be proud ; to those who have neither poverty nor riches, and who are tempted to lose the incentive to nobility. The temptation creeps into the sick-chamber equally as into the heyday of our health. It finds its way into the cloister of the student, equally as it pursues the man of the world, whilst he does his business in the market-place. It enters the pulpit of the divine, with its tendency to elation or despondency, as it seduces the Magdalene in the street, or entices the villain that plots the life of his fellow man. There is

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no lot in life, however secure, guarded, sheltered, or enclosed by strong walls, that is not exposed to the blast and sirocco of temptation.

Sometimes it insinuates itself as the adder creeping through the dried leaves, and you are hardly aware of its almost insensible approach, except by the rustle of the leaves as it draws near ; and then, with crested head and forked tongue, it suddenly springs and inflicts the venom. At other times we detect the wild beast from afar, and feel the awful spell of its fascination ; we are held beneath its mystic influence, we are drawn closer and closer beneath its power, until we know we are in imminent danger, but find it impossible to flee ; and then all suddenly the spring of the beast fixes us.

There is a solidarity in temptation. When some poor woman in her garret, who, in her pain, is almost losing sight of the dear face of Christ, cries, ' Our Father, Which art in Heaven, lead us not into temptation,' she is a soldier in the one great fight, in which all men and

women are more or less engaged the world over ; and the answer to her prayer brings help, though she knows it not, to the king upon his throne, to the student in his cloister, to the man of business in the midst of his engagements. Thus every man, woman, and child is being helped, blessed, and saved by the chivalry, the strength, the victory, and the prayer of every saint, however obscure and hard-pressed. Every time you fail before temptation, you cast depression upon the entire ranks of the sacramental host. Every time you withstand, in your solitary sentry round, the power of evil, you send a thrill of victory through the host of God. No man falls without involving all of us ; no one stands without helping all of us. It is one great fight against evil, though in many different forms, and when we say, ‘ Lead us not into temptation,’ we include the whole Church of God’s elect.

It is wonderful that God, Who cannot be tempted of evil, and Who tempts no man, is yet perpetually suffering His sons

and daughters to be led into the fiery furnace of temptation. The word temptation means to *test*. The storm tests the boat ; the tramp of the regiment tests the staging erected for the great spectacle ; the file of the lapidary tests the diamond. Of necessity, therefore, God permits us to be tempted. Angels have been tested before us, and have stood ; devils have been tested before us, and have fallen. All moral beings must be tempted, tested, tried, that they may know themselves, and that their true nature may be approved before the universe. God desires, that we turn these testing moments to our weal, but the devil takes advantage of them to turn them to our ill. God allows us to be tempted that it may be a stepping-stone upwards ; the devil takes advantage of it that it may become a stumbling-block downwards.

God casts us into temptation that He may bring out everything that is good in us, and may so strengthen and approve our virtue ; the devil takes advantage of the hour of temptation to suggest that

we should step down, abdicate, resign the fight, allow ourselves to drift, and give full licence to all the evil that is in us. But God cannot do otherwise than bring the race, as He did His Son, through the ordeal of temptation, that men may have an opportunity of becoming pure, if no longer innocent; of transmuting innocence into purity; and by successive acts of resistance becoming more than conquerors through His strength. God, therefore, though He cannot be tempted, permits us to be, and His desire is that through temptation we may step up into higher heights of holiness than had been otherwise possible.

Therefore, O child of man, take heart; thy Father's hand is leading thee. Remember it is the Father to Whom the Lord taught us to address the prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation.' It is thy Father's hand. He *made*, and therefore knows just how much thou canst stand; *loves*, and will not imperil thee needlessly. His gentle, tender succour is always by thy side, and if thou say to Him, 'Father,

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Father, I am dismayed ; I fear I cannot stand the ordeal ; I dread lest I shall yield before the attack,' He bends over thee, with caress and reassurance : ' Child, I am with thee, nearer than ever in the dark valley ; I am able to make thee stand ; I would not have brought thee here if I had not counted the cost ; I am able to be thy very present help in thy time of trouble ; I have carried others through this ordeal, and I can carry thee ; only keep near My side, only look away from the tempter to My face, only cease to trust thyself, and rest and depend absolutely upon Me, and I Who have led thee into this temptation will lead thee out of it ; I Who have brought thee hither will carry thee forward. Be of good cheer ! See ! there waits for thee the crown, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to each soldier who has stood true to Him in the hour of trial, and thou couldst not win *that*, if thou didst not bear *this*. It is because I want thee to win it that I am exposing thee to the peril of this hard fight.' So the child says, ' Father, be

it so ; my heart and my flesh fail, but Thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.'

* * * *

In the Greek Testament the same word is used of God and the devil, in relation to the trial of human virtue. But there is a wide difference between the two aspects of each trial. As we have seen God puts trials in our way, intended to be stepping-stones on which we may step to higher things ; those which Satan puts in our way are meant to be stumbling-blocks over which we may fall to our destruction.

God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man, but He permits us to be tempted within certain carefully defined limits, that we may be reminded of our weakness and dependence, may realize more completely Christ's sufficiency, and may have deeper sympathy with the tempted and fallen. Satan must obtain permission before touching Job's flesh ; must obtain permission before he sifts the Apostle as wheat ; and may not go beyond

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what man can bear (Job i.—ii. ; Luke xxii. 31 ; I Cor. x. 13).

There is no sin in temptation, else our Lord could not have been led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 'He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.' We may pass for days together through the valley of the shadow of death, with evil ones creeping up behind us and whispering their horrid suggestions in our ears ; but if we remain true to Christ, if we are so infilled by His Holy Spirit that we turn from them with loathing—nay, if we are always appropriating more of His character as the shield on which to catch the fiery darts of the wicked—so far from being sin, temptation may even become a means of grace.

The fact of our being severely tempted does not indicate that we are deteriorating in Christian graces. On the contrary, boys pillage orchards only when the fruits are ripe, and thieves break in to steal only when there is the repute of property. So, also, Satan's approach to the soul is a sign that it is maturing in the

divine life, and becoming mellow and riper.

In every temptation there is the presence of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. This is the Trinity of Evil. There are *three* Trinities in Unity—Above, Within, Beneath. Above—Father, Son, and Spirit, but one God. Within—Spirit, Soul, and Body, but one individual. Beneath—Devil, World, and Flesh. And whenever we are tempted, we may discern the presence of these three, which are distinctly named in Eph. ii. 3 as the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience, the course of this world, and the lusts of our flesh.

The *world* is the appearance or semblance of advantage which allures us from the narrow track of the divine will into forbidden paths, as the mirage allures the caravan to its destruction, or as the will-o'-the-wisp leads the unwary traveller into the morass. In every temptation there is present some advantage which the evil one promises will accrue from doing wrong. 'See,' he cries, 'how much pleasure and

profit will result. One act of disobedience to God, and of obedience to me, and all this will be yours.' But it is a vain promise. All his pledges miscarry, and when the soul asks for the fulfilment of the bargain into which he has entered, of so much pleasure for so much sin, the hollow laughter of the tempter is the only answer, as the fancied paradise turns to thorns and briars, and the flashing soap-bubble with its iridescence is seen to be but a drop of soap and water.

The *flesh* is 'self' spelt backwards. It is '*me*,' as the Apostle tells us in Rom. vii. 18. Sometimes it is clothed in the rags of utter unregeneracy (Gal. v. 19); at other times in the guise of sanctification and perfectionism (Gal. iii. 3). But it is always the same strong self-assertion, which is the objective to which temptation makes its appeal.

As for the *devil*, we only know his history in part. The Master says that he 'abode not in the truth,' from which we infer that he was created in the truth; and since our Lord speaks of him as prince of

this world, we may conclude, with Milton, that originally he was an archangel, fair as the morning, lustrous with the jewels of peerless virtue and grace, the vicegerent and governor of our earth, which quired sweetly with her sister spheres around the throne of the Eternal (John viii. 44 ; xii. 31 ; xiv. 30).

We must not attribute to the devil omnipotence, omniscience, or omnipresence, which belong only to God Almighty ; but his work is supplemented by the fellowship and assistance of myriads of fallen spirits, which the New Testament habitually describes as demons. There is only one devil, accuser and foe of mankind, but there are principalities and powers of wicked spirits who rule the darkness of this world (Eph. vi. 12, R.V.).

When Lucifer, the son of the morning, fell from his first estate, he drew with him a train of fallen spirits, whom Jude describes as the angels ‘ which kept not their first estate,’ and his fall also reacted on the whole creation, which had been

his province. As man's sin sowed it with thorns and briars, so, in some former state, which may lie in a parenthesis between the first and second verses of the book of Genesis, the sin of the devil made the whole creation subject to vanity, not willingly (*i.e.* not of its own will), but by reason of him (*i.e.* the evil one) who had subjected it. Now, however, it lives in hope that it may be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and made free with the freedom of the sons of God. Goethe was wont to say that nature seemed to him to be as a captive girl sighing for emancipation from her fetters.

The motive of the devil's hatred towards mankind may be traced to his hatred to the Son of God. He cannot reach Him directly, and therefore strikes at Him through those whom He has taken into union with Himself. But perhaps there is a profounder reason. When God declared His purpose to create man in His own likeness, and after His own image, and to give him dominion over the

works of His hands, the proposal aroused the devil's fiercest antagonism. Should he be quietly dispossessed of his lawful authority? Should this upstart race assume his empire and wield his sceptre? Should the transference be effected by the mere expression of the divine will, and without taking him into account? It could not be thought of for a moment. So he plotted to make man subject to himself. If man reigned, at least he should do so as his serf! Hence the Temptation and the Fall.

IN THE FIRST TEMPTATION WE MEET
THE TRINITY OF EVIL, OF WHICH
WE SPOKE BEFORE

Satan is there, who is known to the end of Revelation as 'that old serpent, the devil' (Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2). And why should it be thought incredible that he should appear to speak by a serpent's mouth? Surely a ventriloquist could do as much! The *world* is there, in the appearance of gain in wisdom and pleasure which might be expected to accrue from

eating the forbidden fruit. And the *flesh* is there, in Eve's suggestion that the tree was desirable 'to make one wise.' And as Eve's eyes rested on the forbidden object, as its pleasantness and desirableness became increasingly evident, passion became more and more inordinate, until the protests of conscience and gratitude were hushed, the will's consent was given, and the deed was done. This is the history of every temptation ; and we can only be kept from yielding, on our side at least, when we avert the eyes of our body and of our mind from the forbidden thing. Well might the psalmist cry, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity !' Well might the preacher cry, 'Keep thine heart above all that thou keepest, for out of it are the issues of life !'

So man made *self* the centre rather than God, and herein our race fell—fell from its throne of power. The crown rolled from our brow, the empire passed from our hand, and only in the averted eye of the wild beast, eluding that of man, or in the

instinctive fear excited among the lower creation by the tones of the human voice, are there any indications remaining of man's lofty original destiny.

But God's purpose could not be set aside ; His will must be vindicated ; and so the Son of God emptied Himself and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, that as man He might bruise the serpent under His feet, and regain the lost supremacy.

In the eighth psalm there is a recital of the ancient covenant of man's supremacy. Musing beneath the oriental sky, the psalmist meditates on the littleness and the greatness of man—little as compared with the mighty orbs that roll in the heavens, great as entrusted with such dominion over the works of God's hands ; but the proud boast of the psalmist is met by the wail of the writer to the Hebrews, ' We see not yet all things put under Him.' By the plaintive confession of that voice man is, in spite of all that God created him for, a dethroned, uncrowned monarch, awaiting

his rehabilitation. This is the story of paradise regained.

It used to be my perpetual wonder that Milton should make the regaining of paradise turn on the temptation of our Lord, but I understand it now, and admit that he could have done no other, so completely is the scene in the wilderness a reversal of all that happened in the garden.

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION REVERSED THE
TEMPTATION AND FALL OF MAN

The conditions were somewhat similar, though much harder. The first Adam was tempted in a garden, the Second in a wilderness. Both, however, were tempted about food,—the one as to a luxury in food, the other a necessity ; the one when there was no special urgency, the other after forty days of fasting ; Adam in innocence, Christ in the first glory of the title with which His human ears had been greeted—‘My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.’ Why did Adam fall ? It was because he thought he could do

better for himself than God would do for him. Christ stood, because He refused to use His power to help Himself, refused to take anything that His Father did not give Him, refused to go a single step beyond the narrow circle of His Father's will.

Where Adam had fallen, Jesus stood, conquering by His sublime and invincible faith in His Father. This was the victory that overcame, even His faith that God would withhold no good thing when the precise hour had struck. And it was shown to all the universe that human nature could withstand the assaults of the fiercest temptation, and even shine brighter for the ordeal, as asbestos does when bathed in a baptism of flame. Thus the Lord regained paradise.

With His back on the joy set before Him, our Lord turned to face the sorrow and loneliness of the way of the Cross. But see what marvel befell. He Who refused to use His power and feed Himself, fed five thousand men besides women and children ; He Who refused to cast

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Himself down from the brow of the mountain, was able to thread His way through the crowd which desired to cast Him down from the mountain—they fell right and left, and made a pathway for Him to escape ; He Who refused the devil's offer on the Mount of Temptation, stood on the Mount of Ascension, with the Cross behind Him, saying, ' All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.'

ON THE CROSS, OUR LORD MET AND
VANQUISHED THE SAME FOES

The *devil*, for He said, ' The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' The *world*, for He said, ' Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' The *flesh*, for it is written, ' God sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and condemned sin in the flesh.' The Cross of Jesus was the greatest manifestation of the power of faith that the world has ever witnessed, when Jesus descended into Hades, singing, ' Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption :

Thou wilt show Me the path of life.' And His faith was vindicated, for God hath highly exalted Him, and hath put under His feet all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

Those who receive the Christ-nature into their hearts, receive that which has passed through the fiercest test. As the blessed Master overcame in His earthly life, so will He overcome in the person of all who open their nature to receive Him as the Life of their life.

Do not dread temptation. God leads us through it, that we may know our own weakness, and turn to Him for strength. Temptation roots us in God. It may even become a means of our sanctification, if, whenever we are tempted to any evil thing, we at once turn to Christ, and claim from Him the opposite grace. 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh.' The presence of temptation rings the electric bell, and bids the soul shelter nearer Christ, and

put on something more of His purity, and sweetness, and strength. Let us not watch the tempter, but look off to Jesus. 'Who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

* * * *

There are three conditions which will conduce to victory—Christ's death, Christ's life, Christ's environing presence.

All must be of Christ, because His nature has alone proved strong enough to overcome all the power of the adversary. The devil matched himself against Adam in his primal innocence, against Samson the strongest, Job the most patient, Moses the meekest, Solomon the wisest, and in each case scored a victory. But when he matched himself against the Son of Man he fell as lightning from heaven.

If we stand in the Adam nature, or if we combine it to however small an extent with the Christ nature, failure is inevitable. It is only when the soul, baffled and despairing, like a seabird which cannot stand against the tempest and makes for

land, hides itself in the cleft of the rock, that we become more than conquerors. Hence the repeated injunctions of the Apostle to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and to be strengthened in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Christ's death.—We are not now speaking of Christ's death for sin, but of the distinct break that His death made between His life before and after. 'In that He died, He died unto sin once.' Its solicitation could no longer be addressed to His pure and sinless nature ; its appeals might not lift their voices to allure ; Satan could no longer hiss his questions. The world had tried her blandishments, she had spread before His gaze all her kingdoms with their power and glory, to deflect Him from the way of the Cross, but she would have that opportunity no more. His nature would no longer be susceptible to hunger and thirst, to weariness and nervous overstrain. Henceforth, as He stepped up into the sphere of resurrection life, He would cease

to be subject to the miasma of evil as it haunts the lowlands of this world, and would stand upon the glorious heights where the air is too rare for the bacillus of evil to exist, for it is written, 'There shall in no wise enter anything unclean, nor he that maketh abomination or a lie.'

There is a sense, therefore, in which we should participate with Him in this, as though we might enter into His grave, lie where He lay, and interpose the great stone between ourselves and the old life from which we have come.

Of course, we shall be exposed to temptation, and we shall still bear in our nature the susceptibilities which are biassed towards evil; but we shall make a decisive break with the companionships, the habits, the methods of spending our leisure hours, which have perpetually entangled us. I cannot emphasize this too strongly. I am persuaded that in our conflict with evil we must avoid everything that would lead us into temptation. Adopting another image, we must, as our Lord said, pluck out and cast away the most precious

and useful members if they cause us to offend.

Such a breach with the past was the first step Augustine took towards the true life. You remember how he was torn between his mother's prayers and a woman's unholy influence, and how in the garden at Milan he thought he heard the voice that bade him take the Gospels and read. His eye lit on the words, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make no provision for the flesh,' and instantly the bond that held him was snapped, and he went out as Christ's freeman, to become a saint.

Christ's life.—We shall be saved by His life. It is not enough merely to resist temptation. By this means we may be kept, but shall miss the spoils that may accrue if temptation be properly handled.

Temptation always indicates the weak spot. Satan is too wise to assail us where we are strong. Any suggestion therefore on his part reveals a corresponding weakness on ours. His attack should, therefore, act upon us as the electric bell struck by

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the entering housebreaker acts upon the sleeping family, stirring us to take instant precautions, and to assimilate from the living Saviour more of the opposite grace.

Whenever a temptation comes, simultaneously with it there comes the opposite grace. Whenever we are tempted to impurity, the pendant branches of the grace of God reach over our path, bending low beneath the weight of clusters of purity. As soon as we are tempted to cowardice, there is the strength of the lion of the tribe of Judah within our reach. Side by side with the temptation to fretfulness, murmuring, and discontent, there are the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. The temptation is permitted to come to empty us of our self-complacency and confidence, and to compel us to look up and apprehend that for which we have been apprehended. We would never have known ourselves if we had not been tempted; and should certainly have imagined that we were much better than we now know ourselves to be. Certainly we would never have known what Christ

was capable of doing for the soul. No, we should have missed the proof of Christianity if we had not in the stress of the hour of our need laid hold upon His might and been at peace with Him ; and therefore, though every morning we say, 'Lead us not into temptation,' we know that God loves us too well to answer our prayer just in the way that we might desire.

Temptation may thus become a means of grace to us if we use it as the occasion for obtaining from the Saviour graces in which we were running low, but which in Him are ever brimming for our reception.

Christ's presence.—The other day, when visiting one of our great metropolitan hospitals, I noticed an attendant carrying a tray across the passage which left a strong scent of disinfectant behind. On further inquiry I discovered that he was carrying the instruments to the theatre for an operation, and that they were always kept in carbolic that they might be unable to convey the least germ of disease to the opened wound of the patient. What that

carbolic antiseptic was to those instruments, the presence of Jesus, made real to us by the Holy Spirit, is to us. And one cannot help breathing the prayer as one anticipates the opportunity of dealing with the consciences of men, 'Lord, keep me in the disinfectant of Thine own holy presence.'

A young manufacturer once said to me, 'I know comparatively little of the Holy Spirit, except as He makes Jesus real; but if ever I lose the sense of His presence for half an hour, I go into my counting-house, shut the door, and say, "What have I done, Spirit of God, that Thou hast withdrawn from me the presence of my Lord?"' Surely if this were our prevailing experience, sin would have no power at all over us. Blessed and satisfied with Him, we should have no taste, but rather abhorrence and aversion, for all those things which might grieve Him to the heart. 'Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.'

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What are the causes of the constant failure

in our lives? We have made many resolutions, but they have been in the energy of our own nature, and have not been strong enough to withstand the onset of the evil one. Human nature is not strong enough to hold its own against the devil and his agents : that has been proved myriads of times in the course of history.

With bitter entreaty we have called on God to *help* us ; but our use of that word suggests that we think that our co-operation is necessary, instead of leaving the whole brunt of the conflict to be met by our Redeemer. We remember how the goddess mother dipped her babe in the fabled stream of immortal power, holding him by his baby heel, but she forgot that the spot her finger covered remained vulnerable, and it was there that the fatal arrow pierced him and made him bite the dust. So, if there is anything of ourselves in the conflict with the power of darkness, it is there that we shall fail. It is not enough to say, 'Help, O Lord' ; we must rather cry, 'Lord, save, or we perish,'

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casting upon the strong Son of God the entire responsibility of our deliverance.

But, perhaps, our chief source of failure arises from the fact that our senses are not exercised to distinguish between good and evil. This is a most important item in our conflict with evil. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 14) we learn that it is the sign of mature Christian growth, when the spiritual senses are exercised in this discernment. It is probable that there is an exact parallel between the senses of the body and of the spirit. In the former, to be 'quick of scent' will often save us from incurring contagion. An ill odour is a danger signal, indicating that some noisome matter is exhaling poison of which we do well to beware. We start back, arresting our steps, we turn instantly away to inhale pure air, and we are saved from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday. The quicker our senses are the more likely are we to enjoy immunity from disease. The parallel holds in the spiritual sphere. There are some whose

spiritual senses are so blunt that they can read paragraphs in the daily press, or novels which are full of polluting suggestions, can visit playhouses, and listen to dialogues and conversations, with no consciousness of having received those evil impressions which are certain to work injuriously in blunting moral perception, exciting polluting imagination, and issuing finally in the act of shame. There was therefore every reason why the Apostle should pray that the love of the Philippians should abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment, so that they might discern the things that differed, and might be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ (Phil. i. 10).

Let us ask the Holy Spirit, therefore, to give us this discernment, that we may know in a moment when we are going into the zone of temptation, and arrest our steps.

Too often we do not expect to be kept. We pray that we may be, but all the while we are convinced that we shall fail. This arises from the fact that our

faith has not been fed and strengthened by fellowship with the living Christ through His Word. But it is the frequent experience of those who live near God, that even when their faith fails, and it seems impossible to believe that God will deliver them, He abides faithful. We must not, however, risk failure by permitting any laxity in our walk or conversation, or any negligence of the sacred Scripture, for if we are watchful in these two particulars, our faith will become strong, and serve as the broad thoroughfare along which the battalion of God's saving health may come into the stronghold of our heart.

Sometimes the failure may be traced directly to a want of definite surrender. We must will ourselves over entirely to Christ if we would experience His keeping power. The key of every chamber and closet in the inward man must be handed over to Him. The King of our lives must have the right of entry into every nook and cranny of our soul, or He cannot be the Deliverer that we need. That is why, throughout the Bible, such care is shown

in connecting His Kingship with His Saviourhood.

‘Rejoice, daughter of Sion,’ cries the prophet, ‘thy King cometh unto thee, having salvation.’ ‘Him,’ said the Apostle Peter, ‘hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.’ ‘First, King of Righteousness,’ says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ‘and afterwards King of Peace.’ In each case there is a priority assigned to the Kingship of Jesus, and it is impossible for any soul to feel the full force of His salvation unless there is an entire submission to His reign. How can the housekeeper manage to preserve her master’s furniture from the moth as long as he keeps one cupboard locked, in which the moth is breeding in some old carpet or coat? How can the physician maintain a family in health as long as one infected drain is emitting poisonous gas? And how can Christ keep our lives pure and blameless as long as we are hiding in our hearts secret thoughts of sin, or permitting in our lives habits and associations which grieve His Holy Spirit?

No captain could undertake to defend a city against the assault of the enemy unless he had absolute control. Be assured that failure in self-surrender will account for failure in the conflict with Apollyon.

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All sin begins in the thought ; as Thackeray says, 'Sow a thought, reap an act ; sow acts, reap habits ; sow habits, reap character ; sow character, reap destiny !' Fruit rots from within. 'As a man thinketh, so is he,' says the wise man (Prov. xxiii. 7). The little thought of evil, like a microbe, comes toward us, started by the great enemy of our soul. It comes nearer and nearer, attracting our attention, exciting our desire. If we dwell on it, passion becomes more and more aroused. We are drawn away by our own lust and enticed. The fever begins to burn right through our system. The passion, be it of covetousness, jealousy, envy, gluttony, or self-indulgence of any kind, becomes overmastering. 'Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth

sin ; and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death' (Jas. i. 15).

In our physical life there are two ways of combating the microbes of disease which infest the air. One is, that we should soak our handkerchiefs, and sprinkle our clothes with some disinfectant, like carbolic ; in this way we carry with us an environing envelope, which is proof against the invasion of the germs of disease ; adapting the words of the Apostle, we may say, that the microbe lusts against the carbolic, and the carbolic against the microbe, so that we may not do what otherwise we would (Gal. v. 17). So when the soul is filled with the conscious presence of Christ, when the living Jesus is a bright reality, sin has no dominion over it ; it lives and moves and has its being in the Holy One of God, and through that divine presence sin cannot penetrate.

There is another way in which we may secure immunity from the microbes of disease. It is said that, when we are in perfect health, the colourless blood-discs,

which float in unnumerable quantities in our arteries and veins, destroy the germs of disease. So when the soul is in perfect health, sin cannot master it. The Life-Blood of the Son of God affords such streams of living energy that sin cannot secure a foothold, or if one little spark of temptation happens to alight, it is immediately quenched as in an ocean.

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Let us once again enter into the true significance of our Lord's death and resurrection. He yielded Himself to the will of God, and in following the path which His Father indicated was brought down to the impotence of death, from which the Father raised Him to glory. It is when we too come to utter helplessness, and commit ourselves entirely to Him who judgeth righteously, that we find those mighty hands raising us from the dust of defeat to the resurrection life and ascension triumph, which are ours when we have no hope in ourselves. When we begin to trust completely and entirely in the Living God, He brings us out of the

horrible pit and the miry clay, setting our feet upon a rock, and establishing our goings.

Only let us see to it that we realize our union with Christ in His death. This is the whole teaching of Rom. vi. We died in Him in the purpose of God, and that which is our standing in God's purpose must be ours also in the reckoning of faith. We must believe that in Him we died unto sin once, that we passed out of the domain of sin, that we are no longer its subjects and serfs, that we have a perfect right to claim and insist upon our freedom. It is our prerogative to live as those who have put the Cross and grave of Christ between them and a life of service to sin. The old master has been left for the new. Egypt with its bondage is divided from the land of liberty by the waters of the Red Sea, and 'being set free from sin we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.'

We shall never be absolutely sinless in this world, because sin is a coming short

of God's glory as well as a violation of His will, but we may be delivered from conscious sin. Always there will be in us a susceptibility to evil; always the presence of the tempter; always the liability to fall. The heights of the absolutely holy will always tower above us in the blue sky; but in spite of all, we may be kept from known and conscious sin. In the holy sight of God, and judged by His perfect standards, our best will be full of infinite deficiency, but up to the measure of our knowledge we may walk before Him in holiness and righteousness all our days. Never faultless in this world, we may yet be blameless. We shall always need the precious Blood to cleanse us from sin, which God's eye may discern even if it is hidden from ours. The work which our Lord did for His disciples, when He girded Himself and washed their feet, we shall always need Him to do for us, but we may walk with God in the sweet consciousness that there is no known controversy between Him and us.

Each day as we walk with God in the light, He will show us more perfectly His will, and we shall seek that it shall be more perfectly realized in us, until, beholding the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image by the work of the Holy Spirit from glory to glory.

Christian Holiness in Ministerial Life

BY THE

REV. J. ELDER CUMMING, D.D.

III

CHRISTIAN HOLINESS IN MINISTERIAL LIFE

THE subject assigned to me in this chapter is that of the holiness of the ministers of Christ, as affecting, and affected by, their service of life and sanctuary. In many respects it is a delicate, as well as a difficult task, and possible only because one's self is included in the subject; because it deals, not with the whole body and company of the clergy, but with each individually and personally; and because He Who assigns special labour does not fail in carrying us through.

Need I dwell, to begin with, on the special difficulties and temptations of the lives that are devoted to the flock of

Christ? The Temptations—of which the foremost is to make their own personal service of Christ only a part of their business? So that they read the very Word of God, rather in pursuit of subjects and texts, than for their own edification or joy. It is possible to put our work between us and God; to make the pulpit the chief thought of the soul; to make success in the ministerial life, disguised as concern for others, the goal we seek and live for. Surely this is to live on a low plane of holiness. Surely it is the world from which we have learned this, and the maxims of the world which govern it. The chief end of the servant of God is not that *he should be a great preacher and a very successful pastor!* Need I urge that all motives and desires should be subsidiary and subservient to the one thought of—GOD? And need I quote the self-revelation of the Master as authority for that?—‘I came not to do Mine own will, but the Will of Him that sent Me.’ Let us lay it down, as the fundamental maxim of our office, that our

work is the outcome of our inner life ; that it is only as we are, what we recommend or urge, that we can do that work with any efficacy ; that unless we speak from some experience, we are but beating the air ; that speculative teaching can never be practical teaching ; and that we must ‘ prove all things ’ ourselves first, ere we can safely, or hopefully, or even intelligently, press them upon others.

Grant fully that the object of our ministerial life and labour is not self, but others. Nay, the more truly we can live for the Lord, the more we forget self, and rise above the very thought of it. The habit of denying self passes into the deeper and more blessed habit of *forgetting it*. Grant all this, thankfully ! Yet, what is the way to reach that object ? There is only one. ‘ I am the way.’ To take Christ in all His fulness is surely to take Him as ‘ The Way.’ And all the by-paths, and the would-be ‘ short cuts,’ are mistakes, which imply returning and beginning again. He gives the only fitness we can have. Nay, He *is* the

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fitness for our work. Where there is no secret life of faith, preparation, and fellowship, there is no labour which God can have any pleasure in.

There are two things which belong essentially to our office, without which no man can be an acceptable or worthy servant. We must be able to tell a seeking soul how to be '*born again.*' Remembering how, to the Jewish rabbi, the Lord declared that till a man is 'born again' (born a *second time*, and born *from above*—for both thoughts are in the Greek) he cannot 'see the Kingdom of God,' is it not manifest that every minister of Christ must be able to understand that, to teach it, and to explain it? And yet I have heard of a preacher, who had even become eminent for eloquence, referring a soul, who had applied for guidance, to some one else, as he had no skill to help in such a matter. Surely there are few preachers who are not able to lead another. And yet some experience similar to what is found in an Inquiry Room is of great use, if not a necessity,

for every one who invites sinners to come to Christ.

There is a second thing which also belongs to our office, although I almost fear to set it down. We must be able to guide a Christian who comes asking the question, 'How can he become holy?' In the sacred city of Jerusalem, on my only visit there, a Jew came asking me the question, and a Jew of whom there could be no suspicion. Surely there are many of our hearers, whether they come to us or not, who desire to learn that from us. I well remember an interview with one who told me of her past, and how, from week to week, her first thought when she saw a man enter the pulpit was, 'I wonder whether he can tell me the way!' It was the Way of Life that she meant, and she came to know it. But no doubt the same question is in the heart of many a Christian hearer, 'Could *he* tell me how to become holy?' And what a solemn reflection comes to us, as we pause over it! *Could* we show a man how to reach to that?

We have often no doubt admitted to ourselves that some of our hearers could teach us. Most congregations contain one or two, at least, whom we reverence, and at whose feet we should be glad to sit. But have we ever thought what would happen, what *must* happen, if, anywhere, the pew became more advanced, more spiritual, more truly taught of God, than the pulpit?—if a large part of the congregation knew the Bible better than the preacher, and had wider and deeper experience of the Holy Spirit's work in the soul? I know one place, not a church, where large gatherings are daily found for a season, and where, perhaps, not one of the speakers would hesitate to confess that many of his hearers there could teach him much; and strangely enough, I must add that no place is so easy to speak in, because one feels that very poor and commonplace statements are taken home and made very real in the experience of the auditors. It was a great surprise when I first made the discovery. But the difference is manifest

between the occasional delivery of a message and the weekly instruction of the same people, year by year. Nor does it make matters better to avoid addresses that contain doctrine, and to seek every week not to instruct but to offer kindly thoughts to the people that may interest or help them. For what help can the well-instructed so receive, or what interest can they feel in the remarks so made? No, no. If the pulpit cannot lead, guide, teach, and admonish those who hear, surely its occupation is gone. Hence in the real knowledge of Scripture, and in the true experience of spiritual life, the minister of Christ ought to be bringing messages from God, which the most deeply taught of his hearers will be more thankful for than any other. But to this end he must himself be taught of God, and must be learning every year.

In discharging this branch of our sacred office, there are two mistakes, nearly opposite to each other, that we are apt to fall into. The one is to be too elementary in our teaching, and the other

to be too advanced for our hearers ; and it is difficult to say which of these is the more to be deprecated. It is surely plain, as has already been urged, that to speak only for those who know little is to make our preaching vain, wearisome, and of no effect. It is then a reiteration of what our people already know. There is nothing to fix the attention, nothing to stimulate the heart, nothing to touch the conscience. Dr. Chalmers was right in maintaining that every sermon ought to be an appeal to conscience. It should either tend to convince us of sin, or it should set before us possibilities of feeling and service and character which we have not reached. So long as it does these things it cannot be said to be beneath the attention of the people. But there is an opposite error. It is to pitch the keynote of sermons always for the few who have outstripped the rest. What can be more lamentable than thus to be over the heads of the bulk of the congregation, who can get very little benefit to themselves ? I am told that the commonest mistake made in

war is that the soldiers fire too high ; and that almost the hardest lesson they have to learn is to aim low enough to be effective. And wherever a man is himself much in advance of his congregation, he is very apt to make the same mistake. How indescribable must have been the temptation of the Master Himself to become unintelligible because He had so much to say which His disciples or hearers could not understand ! He met it by speaking in parables ; and sometimes by miracles, which were *parables in action*.

Such are some of the thoughts and lessons which we have all been learning in the experience of the ministry. They might be multiplied easily, on similar lines. But it is probably time to attempt a more systematic consideration of our duty and difficulties.

Let us pass, then, in farther elucidation of our subject, to the inquiry what Scripture teaches us regarding the ministerial servants of God, and see what is there laid down as to the holiness which is the fitting mark of the personal life.

And it will not, I trust, be deemed strange that we begin with the Old Testament, or that we should expect to find there the statement of qualifications for the office of the minister of God which may be of use in our more privileged days. Should such a thought have lodged anywhere, and be difficult to dislodge, I have only to ask that a little reflection be given to the book of Psalms, the repository of the devotional experience of the olden saints; and that the question should honestly be put, whether, in depth and reality of real dealing with God, the post-apostolic Church has ever yet reached the solemn truth and power of the psalmists?

I. We begin, then, with what is said about the Levites. In Num. xviii. 20 (R.V.) we have the sum of it: 'And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any portion among them: I am thy Portion and thine Inheritance among the children of Israel.' Is there any one so ignorant of God's dealings as

to suppose that this was meant as a punishment to Aaron and his tribe? It was, on the contrary, God's way of showing favour; *and that was quite understood at the time!* Which of us can understand it now? Let me summarize the arrangements made for the Levites.¹ (1) The whole tribe was included in these. Its males (in three divisions) numbered 22,300 souls; adding a nearly equal number of women and of young children under a month old we have at least 45,000. (2) They were not numbered at all as among the children of Israel, but were left out of calculation in the records. (3) No land was given to them, as to the other tribes. (4) They were to be supported out of the tithes and offerings to be presented to God, and to have cities given them to live in, having a sufficiency for food and clothing from time to time. (5) And it was laid down as a great principle, fundamental in the kingdom, that 'God was their Portion.'

¹ They are to be found chiefly in Num. iii. (note vv. 40-51); Deut. xviii. 1-8; Josh. xiii. 14-33.

These laws meant two great things, which were in evidence during all the history of Israel. (1) The Levites, including of course the priests, were *separated* from all the other tribes, to be a peculiar possession and treasure for God. Behind this law of separation lay very important thoughts. They were to belong entirely to God in a sense that no others did : and *this fact* constituted the essence of their separation. The other tribes did not. The world had its share *of them*. (2) The second thing shown us is that the Levites were forced to live *a life of faith*. They had no other dependance. Every day challenged them to say whether they could trust God, and whether they were satisfied to be His, and under His care. It is beautiful to trace the result in history. So far as I remember, there is not an instance to be found in Scripture of any dissatisfaction with it. There is evidence (Mal. i.) that they were careful to demand all that was due to them under the law ; and that they kept the best of the offerings for

themselves, giving the worst for sacrifice. But I read of no rebellion at inequality of treatment.

And there are frequent indications in the Old Testament that they valued their spiritual possessions. In his Lamentations (iii. 24), Jeremiah,¹ who was 'a priest in Anathoth') says—'*The Lord is my Portion*, saith' my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.' In Ps. lxxiii. 26 Asaph the Kohathite sings, 'God is the strength of my heart and *my Portion for ever*.' And in the great psalm (cxix. 57) the authorship of which has been much disputed, the author seems to me to confess that he is a Levite,² who spent a long, quiet life

¹ In Jer. x. 16 we have a remarkable verse: 'The Portion of Jacob is not like these, for He is the former of all things; and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance.' Is the meaning this, that as the Levites were in Israel, so Israel was in the world, having only God, and satisfied with God?

² The authorship of this psalm is a very interesting question. Its chief mark perhaps is the want of confession of sin, to be found only in two verses (vv. 67, 176). It is a spiritual autobiography of a life spent in quiet meditation and obedience. Daniel has been suggested as the author (partly from vv. 69, 134,

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in solitude, musing over the Word of God—‘*The Lord is my Portion* : I have said that I would observe Thy words.’

It is not to be supposed that the same rule as is above described is binding on the ministers of Christ. In the case of the Levites there was an express commandment of God ; in the other case there is none. But it is interesting to remember that the Levitical law is the foundation of the system of the clergy being supported by *tithes* (or *teinds* as they are called in Scotland), which began at a very early date in the Christian Church. It was an attempt at least at a Scriptural basis for the position, though of course its character was changed when it was made a civil law and a property acknowledged by the law, instead of resting on God’s command only and consisting of the offerings made, under the commandment, to God Himself. Still, it serves

161), but the contrast with Daniel ix. seems to me to be much too great for that to be true. It is a life spent with God in retreat and silence, which is in evidence in the psalm.

vividly to recall the position of the Levites and priests in Israel, as an everlasting and memorable lesson for us. The priests of God were dependent on God. They lived by faith. God Himself was their Portion. And they were satisfied.

II. We pass now to the teaching of our Lord Himself. The teaching^{referred}₃ to, in the first instance, concerned the Apostles. They were, no doubt, in a special position, and they had before them a task such as no other Christian men have ever known. They were to be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and they were entrusted with the gifts of miracles and of inspiration, though these were not at their own disposal, but were kept, as to time and place and circumstance, in God's own hand. Peter could not miraculously deliver himself from prison, and did not know that he was to be set free. Paul could not miraculously cure Epaphroditus when he was 'sick nigh unto death' (Phil. ii. 27), but must abide the Lord's pleasure. James

Ben-Zebedee was not delivered from the hand of Herod. But the very shadow of Peter was used to cure some of the sick (Acts v. 15-6); and, if that seem not to be necessarily involved in the passage, there can be no doubt as to the statement (Acts xix. 12) that the 'handkerchiefs or aprons' brought from Paul did cast out evil spirits. Though these things were confined to apostolic days and persons, there is no reason to doubt that the spiritual directions given by the Lord to the Twelve for their guidance, are good for the servants of Christ still. And if we wish to know that, and how, holiness is to be found and seen in the ministerial life, where can we find a truer guide? I trace then, in the Lord's teaching to the Apostles, eight great truths bearing on their life and holiness, and on ours.

1. The first is their position (St. John xv. 1): 'I am the Vine; ye are the branches.' Here are *union* and *life*; Union to Christ, and life in Him only. From this point we start. All is governed

by this presupposition. Granted this, the rest follow. 'Other foundation can no man lay' (1 Cor. iii. 11).

2. Next comes the essential condition of blessing to them who are 'in Christ Jesus': 'Abide in Me, and I in you' (St. John xv. 4). 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: So neither can ye, except ye abide in Me.' There is, then, such a thing as abiding in Christ; and there is such a thing as *not* abiding in Him. The difference is immense; and the whole question of fruitbearing, not in work only, but in life, depends on which position we are for the time occupying. And our position in Christ is not all; it is correlative with His position as 'in us.' It is, therefore, possible for a believer not to have Christ 'in Him,' at some special season. It follows directly from the Lord's words. And this is a state of danger, and of fruitlessness, which means a very great deal. It explains, for instance, much of unanswered prayer. 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask

whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you' (v. 7). Why is it so?—do we ask? Because then, and then only, we enter into the will of Christ, and our 'asking' accords therewith.

3. The third truth which the Lord taught His Apostles in the same line is, 'Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love' (St. John xv. 9). Pause over the wonderful words. Mere reading them will not do. Think of the Father's love for His only Son? And think that *that* love, intense, tender, protective, perpetual, is felt for us and possessed by us. 'Let us abide in' it! May He keep us in it! Our standard of life! Our power for holiness!

4. The fourth teaching follows: 'As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you' (St. John xx. 21). As, if this were hard to receive, we have it a second time in the record, and that in the most sacred place of all. In St. John xvii. 18, 'As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.' We

remember how it was the ‘sending into the world by the Father, which is shown us as the very foundation of the Lord’s own life ; how time after time He speaks of ‘ Him that sent Me ’ ; how in St. John’s Gospel we can count thirty times when He refers to the Father under this description. Hence, when the same thing is said of us, that, *as* Christ was sent by the Father, *so* we are sent by Christ, we may know what we ought to be, and are assured that He is ready to enable us to be that.

5. The fifth saying of the Lord concerning His Apostles is St. John xv. 26, 27 : ‘ The Spirit of Truth . . . He shall bear witness of Me : and *ye also shall bear witness.* ’ It is true that this seems to be qualified, for it is added, ‘ because ye have been with Me from the beginning ’ ; and it is therefore true of the Twelve in a special sense. But with this qualification—it is true of us. And what a wonder ! ‘ The Spirit of Truth ’ —and *we* ! Both called to witness-bearing, in the trial of Christ. What doth it

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become us then to be, in the light of such a fact!

6. The next teaching of the Lord is St. John xvi. 14: 'He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you.' And, in doing so, 'He shall glorify Me.' 'All things that the Father hath, are Mine' (ver. 15). Is not this last verse the most wonderful thing that Jesus Christ ever said on earth? It leaves absolutely no room for any doubt as to His real and infinite Godhead. I can understand a man saying that it is not an authentic report of what was said, and that therefore it should be removed from the page of Scripture. But I cannot understand how any man can believe that these words fell from the lips of Jesus Christ, and yet can hesitate even as to His absolute Deity? 'All things that the Father hath, are Mine'! Now, these are the things which the Holy Ghost 'receives' (according to our Authorised Version), and which He 'takes' (according to the Revised Version), and 'shows them unto us,' and so 'glorifies Christ.' And Christ Himself tells us so!

What a wonderful teaching—and that *we* should be the scholars to be so taught of God!

7. A seventh statement by the Master seems to vary little from one of those already adduced, (3), but is sufficiently distinct to merit our thought—St. John xvii. 26 : ‘That the love wherewith thou lovest Me may be in them, and I in them.’ It is the closing word of the prayer of the Son to the Father. It is the open acknowledgment that the Father’s love, the same love as Jesus Christ had known for eternity, should be conferred on us, as it had been on Him. The same love! Are the following words added, in order to explain—‘*And I in them*’? Is it the presence of the Lord Jesus in us, ‘Abiding in us,’ which makes possible the other? Is it because we are ‘one with Him,’ and He ‘one with us,’ that when the Father looks on us, and into us, He sees Jesus Christ *there*? But, be the fulness of meaning what it may—and we can only see a small part of it—let us remember,

that love may be ours ; may I say, *is* ours !

8. The last word of the Lord which I quote is found in St. John xv. 19-21 : ' Because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. . . . But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake.' Does it sound surprising, after what has gone before ? The privileges, the marvels, of God's love and Christ's care, under the thought of which the heart has nearly staggered ; and then, this ' hatred,' this ' persecution.' But it was the Lord's own portion. And it would be the Lord's portion again, if He could come once more, and live as a Man among men. And here is the word of warning. Such an opposition may be our portion. Popularity, or the seeking after it, either in respect of preaching or manner of life, has been in modern times one of the most serious and frequent temptations of the clergy, leading sometimes to a poor, thin, almost mean

character, looking for the applause of men rather than God. It may be forbidden us. We may perforce become unpopular men. Is there not more? Does not the Lord mean that just as surely as we are like Him, in our character, in our work, in our separation, so also we must be like Him in the reception which the world gives us. It was because they saw how different He was to the world, and to themselves, how His truth, His character, His words, His life, were their condemnation, that they could not endure Him and never rested till He was destroyed. Were we *all* that Christ was, could they endure us? So far as we are like Him, we must be prepared to meet the dislikes and the enmity of the world still. And ever more this is one great test of conscience, resting on the warning of the Lord.

I quote here some noteworthy words, found in one of the most remarkable mission-books of our day: 'The path that Jesus follows, leads to the Cross. And the question right along will be, Are you going to take that road with

Him? It means, Death to Self, daily. Are you willing to let Him live it out? There is no other way of bringing life and blessing to others.*

III. We turn next to what St. Paul says about the holiness of the ministerial life. It is written by him not directly to us but to two friends, both of whom he calls his 'sons,' in order that they may be guided whom to choose as bishops, presbyters, elders, in the Church and House of God. And it will be obvious that his words are not meant so much to touch the great principles, concerning the inner life, as the outward marks and conditions that are seen of men. For this reason, I take first these marks for the guidance of Timothy and Titus; and then I must fall back on what Paul tells us about himself and his own state as a minister of Christ.

We have in the Epistles to Timothy two

* [Mr. D. E. Hoste, quoted in *Pastor Tsi*, vol. ii. p. 372. The author of the book is Mrs. Howard Taylor, and the publishers are Messrs. Morgan & Scott, London.]

passages bearing on the requirements of the Christian ministry, and one in the Epistle to Titus. The first of those addressed to Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 1-8), and that to Titus (i. 6-9), are more or less parallel. They correspond, with a few differences which I venture to suggest, point to the distinct characters of the two men, the one (Timothy) being the softer and more feeble, and the other (Titus) the more impulsive and stronger. Four directions are practically common to both. A bishop, presbyter, minister, elder, must be (1) blameless in life ; (2) married, to one wife (meaning thereby, it seems to me, not to guard against polygamy, of which there could have been little danger ; nor against a second marriage after the death of a wife ; but, probably, to prevent the hasty divorce which was common among the later Jews, resting upon incompatibility, or even on caprice, and which is common among them even to this day, and is often carried out for the purpose of marrying some one else) ; (3) the third requirement is that there

should be no scandal in the family, from son or daughter, the bishop 'ruling his own house well'; then follows (4) a series of qualities which all point to the dethronement and setting aside of self—in temper, self-will, controversy, and greed. The above four clauses are common practically to both lists. Then follows a fifth, in which different things are urged. On Timothy, whom I take to have been the weaker and less energetic man, in delicate health (with some of its accompaniments), the Apostle urges the need of bishops, etc., being vigilant, moderate, self-contained, not presuming novices, not proud, nor double-tongued. On Titus, whom I take to be the stronger personality, it is urged that he be careful that the bishops, etc., be amiable, friendly, prudent, just, holy, steadfast, with power over others. These are curious differences, and worth study. They may be connected with the people of Ephesus and of Crete, as well as with the two men to whom the Apostle is writing.

We have, as I said above, a third list

(2 Tim. iv. 3-6), which is interesting as being the last thoughts of St. Paul on our subject, and as differing a good deal in detail from the others. Before he comes to this list, in the last chapter he ever wrote, he anticipates it in two verses of the second chapter. In ii. 2, 3, he urges that care be taken that the bishops, etc., to be appointed should (1) be able to transmit the truth to others, who should be teachers; and that (2) they should, as well as Timothy, remember that they may be called on to suffer hardship and affliction, like the Apostle himself. In the verse urging that bishops should be 'able to teach' there is a curious speciality to be observed. In verse 24 of the same chapter there is a similar but distinct phrase, 'apt to teach,' which also occurs in the first Timothy list (1 Tim. iii. 2). The word in both of these is *didactic*. Am I wrong in supposing that it means a certain *theological* gift, as distinguished from both scholarship and speaking power—the want of which is often painfully apparent, and its presence often of great use?

In the second Timothy list itself we have *seven* requirements : (1) to be *instant* which probably means *urgent* ; (2) to be ready 'in and out of season'—like an electric force always in play ; (3) to be prepared to rebuke and convict, but to do so with longsuffering ; (4) to watch against dangers and temptations which beset the ministers of Christ ; (5) to watch themselves, in body and spirit ; (6) to seek to 'fulfil' their ministry ; and (7) to bear in mind the stimulating example of such as have gone before—not forgetting the aged Apostle who loved his son.

Such are the striking last words on this theme. But in order to see their full force, and how much is taken for granted in the background, and in Paul's knowledge of the man he is writing to, I turn with confidence to a remarkable phrase in 1 Tim. vi. 11, where the old man, addressing young Timothy, says—'But thou, O MAN OF GOD, flee these things' (these temptations). Surely one of the most striking words that ever fell from the Apostle's pen ! A phrase

common in the Old Testament to signify a prophet with a direct message from God, but always used with much significance there; while Timothy is the only person so called in the New Testament, and that by his aged father in the faith. Would—oh would—that it could be said of all of us who are ministers of Christ, that such an address would find *us*—‘O man of God’!

Such, then, are the directions given by St. Paul to the two men whom he calls his sons, referring, as I have already said, more to outward and official qualifications than to those of the spirit. And in view of this fact, I may be allowed to add in the shortest possible form a statement with regard to Paul’s own preparation and equipment for such a post, as we gather them from his own epistles. I should rather say what *he aimed at*, and which we know he so wonderfully succeeded in securing. I gather them up into four.

1. He aimed at ‘having a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway’ (Acts xxiv. 16). This was said publicly

before Felix, when he would naturally shrink from saying a word too much of his own spiritual state. Yet what a wonderful aim ! Nothing on his conscience, either towards God or towards any man, and that always !

2. He succeeded in being able to declare solemnly (1 Cor. iv. 4) '*I know nothing against myself* : yet am I not hereby justified : but He that judgeth me is the Lord.' Limit the words as we will, to such matters as were referred to in the context, or such accusations as had been made against him at Corinth, yet he is speaking of his stewardship from God and the need of faithfulness in it ; and he is able to say that 'he knows nothing against himself' ! Happy Paul ! Yet he knows that the Judge has a far higher standard than he.

3. He says again (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10), 'He hath said unto me, My grace is *sufficient for thee*.' And he adds that he glories in weaknesses ; that the strength of Christ rests upon him (*covers* him ; *margin*—*tabernacles* upon him, in the Greek

as the Shechinah in the Tabernacle of Moses); and that he 'takes pleasure' in weaknesses and distresses! Again, happy Paul!

4. Paul was 'filled with the Spirit.' He does not tell us that himself; but three days after his conversion, Ananias is sent unto him by the Lord (Acts ix. 17) with the message, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus who appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' And in Acts xiii. 9 we read that 'Saul, who is also called Paul, *filled with the Holy Ghost*, fastened his eyes on him.' And we may discover how he found it to be a gift not only for a few great trials of duty and trouble, but for the details of his ministerial life, from what he tells the Ephesians (v. 18 et seq.) as to the life that they may lead after receiving this precious gift. For he indicates that the wife and the husband, the father and the child, the master and the slave, the tempted and the struggling, may each and all submit, obey, serve, rule,

and combat, in the power of the Spirit of God. Much more surely may 'the man of God' minister in that power.

5. And the last thought which Paul gives us as to himself, in this connexion, is when he says (1 Cor. xi. 1), 'Be ye followers' (the R.V. distresses us by making it '*imitators*'—it is one thing to follow the footsteps of a leader, and another to imitate him)—'followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' I dare not, however tempted, pause over the verse to expound it fully, but may I at least hint what it implies and involves? If, says Paul, you find it difficult, and apparently impossible, to follow Christ because He is altogether perfect, will you follow me, who am a fellow man, as truly as you are? But only in so far as I follow Christ: be careful lest in anything I have gone wrong; do not follow me in that!

IV. St. Peter contributes something to our subject, devoting to it a part of his short First Epistle. Probably the whole of the last chapter, v., is an address to the presbyters of the churches to whom he

is writing, except the greetings which close the epistle. "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ ; who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed " (v. 1). The exhortations are strongly marked by the personal character of the aged Apostle, mellowed by age and softened by the varied and rare experience of the past. They may be gathered up into four heads or divisions.

1. His first direction to bishops, ministers, presbyters, elders (he includes all under the name of 'elders') is, 'Tend (feed, A.V.) the flock of God which is among you' (v. 2). The image in his mind is that of the shepherd and the flock. The thought present is, that 'the Chief Shepherd' is over all His assistants and servants ; He Who hath purchased the flock, Who cares for it, and Who watches over it. But there is another thought here, a memory, which fills the verse with unspeakable tenderness. It lies in the word translated 'tend.' This is the same word which was spoken by

the Lord to Peter himself, in the memorable interview after the Resurrection, by the Sea of Galilee: 'Lovest thou Me? Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, *Tend* my sheep!' (St. John xxi. 16). Peter passes on the word to the presbyters to whom he is writing: '*Tend* the flock of God.' And St. John also remembered it, and leaves a trace of this in one of his descriptions of glory (Rev. vii. 17): 'The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them' ('*tend* them'—it is the same word; *why* does the R.V. translate it here and here only, 'Shall be their Shepherd?'). The *tending* means something more than feeding—a great deal more; but it means that too. And both Peter and John in their old age remembered the fulness and tenderness of the Lord's injunction about the sheep and the lambs, which the former passes on to the presbyters of his day, and to us!

2. Peter's second injunction to the presbyters as to the spirit of their ministry is (v. 2-4), 'Exercising the oversight' (it

is a strange word, one word, not easy to translate, and is altogether omitted in some of the ancient MSS.) ‘not of constraint, but willingly, according to God ; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.’ I give the whole passage, which is somewhat altered in the R.V., one clause being questioned in the margin, and another being added to the text. But, with or without the changes signified, surely the passage is one of the most weighty and most loving ever addressed to the ministers of Christ. Let us ponder (1) that strange opening word about ‘the oversight’ ; (2) then let us lay to heart the warning against the spirit of constraint, and the need of ‘willingness’ in all our work, meaning, I suppose, that our *wills* have been placed in Christ’s hands, for all our work—would that they were !—and shall be ;

(3) next, let us note the warning against ‘*filthy* lucre,’ not forgetting the strange adjective which is here thrown in and found in this compound form very rarely. It is not applied to money simply, or always ; but in the New Testament only, I think, to money which has been secured in an evil way. It is referred to as a temptation to the servants of God. Note also the positive quality which is here set against this evil desire. ‘Not for the sake of gain, but in real earnestness’—*in dead earnest*, as we sometimes say.

4. Next, St. Peter warns us against a ‘lording it over the charge allotted to us : detecting, and helping us to detect, a very common temptation to be, or attempt to be, lords over the consciences of our hearers. Dealing as we do, or ought to do, so much with conscience, awakening it by our words, and seeking to guide it, the tendency, often insensible, is always present, to claim a right to guide it, and to make our view of the duty of others imperative. Was it not Cromwell who said to the Scotch parsons, ‘I beseech you,

to think it possible that you may be mistaken'? And alas! both Cromwell and they needed to think so, for themselves! *We are so sure!* Yes; for ourselves, our conscience must guide us; but not our neighbour. He has his own. We must not 'lord it over our charge.' But we must, on the other hand, '*make ourselves*' (note the *making*, and the process and the time needed, and the unconsciousness of the process as it goes on) 'ensamples to the flock' (v. 3). And side by side with this, read the words which follow (v. 5, 6); 'Yea, gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble' (grace to *be* humble, and then more grace, with which, being humble, we can be trusted). And do not let us be afraid of becoming 'humble,' lest men take advantage, and treat us as of no account—that, too, is a great temptation! Trust God for that, 'casting all your anxiety (about that, about our influence, our position, etc.) upon HIM, because He careth for you!' Dear old

Peter! how many precious things he had found out in his own experience, and how deeply his words find us, in ours!

5. And then, in this and in all else, let us 'Be sober; be watchful; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom withstand, stedfast in your faith! And the God of all grace, Who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you' (v. 8-10). Note (1) the need of watchfulness; (2) the picture of the lion, walking about, sometimes most dangerous when he is not 'roaring'; (3) the weapon wherewith to fight him, 'faith'—faith which is already 'ours,' and which we have proved often; and (4) above all, let us remember that God has called us, not for a time, but to eternal glory, and that *He* will undertake to keep, to strengthen, and to complete the work which *He* has begun in us!

V. St. John says what must be for us

the basis of a few closing words on our subject. At first, our impression is likely to be that the 'Beloved Disciple' does not directly address the ministers by the word, and that there is little to be found in his writings german to our present purpose. But there is more than is at first sight obvious.

1. I find a remarkable contrast set before us in the short and comparatively little known Third Epistle which bears the name of John. Writing to Gaius, who seems to be an old saint, who had a 'son in the church,' called Demetrius, the writer says that he had already written to Diotrephes, who was apparently the head (or 'Angel') of the church in the district where Gaius lived. He proposed to pay a visit; but Diotrephes did not wish it. It did not suit his plans. It interfered with the 'pre-eminence' which Diotrephes had, and 'loved.' He did not wish to be over-shadowed by an Apostle, and so he declined the visit. He 'receiveth us not.' Not only so. He is actively hostile, 'prating against us'

(me, and my companion) ‘with wicked words.’

‘*They presume too much on having been with the Lord. They have no title to interfere. We must be allowed to judge what is best. They have no jurisdiction here!*’ Nay, he went farther. He will not receive the deputies ; and he forbids any of the ‘brethren’ to do so ; nay, he threatens to excommunicate any who venture to bid them welcome ! And *this* to the Apostle John ! And what does John do ?—the meek, holy old man, likest to his Master of all the Twelve. He submits ; he *has* submitted. He still ‘hopes’ to come, and he will ‘bring to remembrance’ what Diotrephes has been doing ! Here is the contrast. The one figure is what a minister of Christ should *not* be ; the other is what by grace he may become.

2. In another epistle St. John tells us, indirectly, something of himself (1 John iii. 18–22—I quote from the A.R., as giving the sense more perfectly in our English idiom) : ‘Let us not love

in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him.' I think we cannot ponder on these words without perceiving that we have here a remarkable self-revelation of the writer. He is not speaking at random. He is not describing an unattainable state. He is not writing of something that he knows little of himself. The humble, silent, even shy Apostle shows us that *he* knows what it is to have a heart which does not condemn him. And we are sure of this, because he, above all men, has 'confidence toward God.' It is Paul's aspiration for himself, answered and enjoyed, the 'conscience without offence, both towards God and man' (Acts xxiv. 16). This, then, is what, by example rather than precept, by the indirect self-revelation of which he

is barely conscious, St. John teaches us. Self-condemnation implies a condemnation by Him Who is greater than our heart. Where the heart does not condemn, there we have confidence toward God. 'There is therefore, now, *no* condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' if, as that last part, and assuredly I think a genuine part, of the precious verse puts it, 'we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 1). And this is what St. John teaches and recommends as the fitting state of the ministerial servants of God. Would that it were the case with us, with us all!

3. A third teaching is found in St. John's writings, and is also in one sense indirect, but surely not less striking. It is the need and the blessedness of 'abiding in Christ.' We saw elsewhere how the aged Peter dwelt in thought on the words of Jesus Christ recorded in St. John xxi. In the matter now before us, we see even more strikingly that there was one teaching of the Lord that was deep in John's heart, and always recurring to

memory. It is that which furnishes the substance of St. John xv.—the great and ever precious truth of the need and the possibility of ‘abiding in Christ.’ In another place, indicated below,¹ I have endeavoured to show that, of the twelve or fourteen great thoughts round which all St. John’s writings circle, all of them (with one exception) were founded on express sayings of the Master, which could not be forgotten. But of all these instances, not one comes so much to the front as the saying, ‘Abide in Me and I in you.’ In St. John xv., the thought of ‘abiding’ is found already fifteen times ; in 1 John, it occurs twenty-three times ; and in the thirteen verses of 2 John, it occurs three times. The Master was never really absent from the Beloved Disciple. He was always ‘abiding’ with him—nay, ‘in Him.’ And that because John’s heart was always with the Master ;

¹ See *He chose Twelve*, by the present writer, published by Drummond, Stirling and London. In Appendix I. a list of the words in St. John’s writings is given, with the sources of these in sayings of the Lord, recorded by John himself.

‘seen through a glass darkly,’ *but* seen !
 And that, yes *that*, in what is thus
 indirectly, but not the less sweetly or
 powerfully, presented to all ministers of
 Christ, as the possible condition for
 them !

4. Once more, we are taught something
 by a word which often occurs in the
 Apocalypse. The seven ‘Epistles’ in
 the first three chapters are addressed to
 the ‘Angels’ of the churches mentioned
 there. Without entering into any minute
 discussion as to what is intended by the
 word, it is admitted (I think by all
 commentators) that they are, or include,
 the ministers of Christ, resident in them,
 and teaching there. In every case a
 blessing and a promise are added ; and
 though not restricted to, these embrace—
 and, we might almost say, begin with—the
 ‘Angels’ themselves. But *the condition*
 of promise and blessing, is that they shall
 ‘OVERCOME.’ This cannot be by
 chance. It cannot be unimportant. Seven
 times, in every case of an ‘Angel’ ad-
 dressed (ii. 7, 11, 17, 26 ; iii. 5, 12, 21),

the blessing is '*to him that overcometh.*' It is always in the singular, and it is always addressed to the 'Angel'; though it includes more than him, it cannot mean to leave *him* out. Now, at first we form the impression, and perhaps rush to the conclusion, that the time of victory referred to is at death, or at the Coming of the Lord. And, no doubt, that is the time of the complete victory. But all the fighting is then over. It is rather the result of the victory, than the victory itself. The enemies then are all gone! The times of victory have been during life. Daily 'fightings,' and daily success. And that this was the thought in St. John's mind, we see from the use of the same word in his First Epistle. 'THIS IS THE VICTORY which overcometh the world—even our faith' (1 John v. 4). And the explanation of it is found in the previous chapter (iv. 4). 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them' (already!) 'because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.'

There is the secret of victory! And victory is the condition of all the wondrous promises and blessings which are written in the Apocalypse, and which, extended to all, are addressed directly to 'the Angels of the churches.'

Christian Holiness and Evangelical Work

BY THE

REV. HUBERT BROOKE, M.A.

Vicar of St. Margaret's, Brighton.

IV

CHRISTIAN HOLINESS AND EVANGELICAL WORK

WHEN the question is asked what the practical outcome is of any religious movement, one difficulty always arises. Can spiritual effects be tabulated in definite figures, and is it possible to define accurately the results of the work of the Holy Spirit? Take so well-known an illustration as the missions of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, and see how hard it is to give a really effective reply to one who asks what came of them. Probably thousands of Christian workers could each tell of certain lives that had been changed and homes blessed as the result of that work; but if you ask for figures, who can give them? The same difficulty faces us in trying to answer

the question of the outcome in Evangelical enterprise of the whole Keswick movement. Many hundreds of cases might be known to the individual attendants of the Convention, but the summary of the real and final results are quite out of reach of the recorder. The attempt can only be made to estimate such results in the broadest way, with an occasional sample of fruit to suggest what the harvest really is.

In the first place it ought to be borne in mind, when any such question is asked as to the result of the Convention and its teaching in Christian service, that the original invitation to its meetings, and the titles given to these and similar gatherings, never put forward the practical outcome of Evangelical enterprise as the prime object in view. Whether the heading for such invitations were 'For the promotion of holiness,' or 'For the deepening of the spiritual life,' in either case Christian enterprise was not the aim declared. However certain it might be that this would follow in due time, and

however clearly the connexion might be discerned between a right faith and a fruitful life, yet it was not the latter but the former that was the declared purpose of the Convention movement, and was always kept in the foreground. Even if no definite and visible result had become apparent for some time, that would not have affected the rightness and wisdom of the work in the least. If the work was such as the Word of God taught and enforced, it was thereby the duty of those who could discern this to give their best energies to its performance. The question of results is ever put in the second place, when a true Christian sees any line of conduct or teaching to be God's will and call for him.

Exactly the same condition prevailed in the earlier stages of the missionary movement of a hundred years ago. There were plenty of onlookers ready to hinder the proposed work, on the ground that no results would or could flow from such a preposterous and novel enterprise as preaching the Gospel to the Hindus.

But that objection had no effect whatever in staying the action of those who saw that it was the will and call of God that His Word should be carried to the ends of the earth. Their only aim was to do the will of God, and the consequences, whether great or small, could be left to Him. Such was exactly the position of the men who carried on the Keswick Convention in its earlier years. They had no immediate concern with the question of results, but they had to do and teach what to them had become the very plain message of their Master.

To a large extent the real outcome of the movement, to which it is possible to point to-day, was not only not anticipated by the early workers, but had not even come into their range of consideration. The final results such as we are able to see now had not been discerned as a natural consequence of the work. Some years ago I asked one of the oldest of the Keswick teachers, whether he had from the first taken this teaching to be an end, or only a means to something

further in Christian service. He answered me, that he had been quite sure that it was only a means and not an end. Then, when I asked what he had considered the real end to be, he replied that he had not then known, nor did he think that any of them had seen it at the beginning of the movement. At the time he spoke to me, the evident influence of the Convention on the missionary cause was becoming very apparent ; but his answer made it quite clear that certainly he, and probably all the other speakers, had done their early work in simple obedience to the Word of God, and without discerning at all what the final fruit would be. The great principle enunciated by our Lord, ' If any man will do His will, he shall know,' is as applicable to the later as to the earlier stages of Christian doctrine and service. Only as the child obediently does the work put before it in the lower classes of the school is it prepared to discover the real benefit and end of those lessons when it reaches the higher classes.

The fundamental aim and object of the Keswick Convention, therefore, was the promotion of holiness, and not the development of new Christian enterprises. Character, and not service, was the aim held closely before all who spoke and heard at those meetings. What we were intended to *be*, and not what we were called to *do*, was the prominent thought in the whole Convention. We did not profess to meet in order to develop the fullest Christian activities, but to develop the highest possible Christian character. The two are as closely connected as cause and effect, for no full Christian powers will be exerted save from a full Christian character. But it is quite consistent with the divine order, and in accordance with the model of the New Testament procedure, that a deliberate separation should exist between these two things, and that we should give our attention to the formation of the highest type of character in the Christian, before insisting on the normal outcome of Christian activities. The training of the twelve disciples certainly

proceeded on these lines ; for it was mainly the great lessons of character that were being impressed upon them during the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry, and mainly the fruits of active service that followed in the after years of their work.

The Convention was a perhaps unconscious protest against the popular mistake, that a newborn soul is quite competent at once for full Christian service ; it served to emphasize the truth, often quite overlooked, that service is immensely influenced by the character and conduct of him who renders it ; and it re-enforced, with much needed precision, the fact that a right character is of far more importance in the eyes of the Master than any amount of outward activities. The lesson of 1 Cor. xiii. is ever in need of being pressed upon a world that loves to judge by externals, and is slow to believe that a heart and character of love outstrips in real worth all the most magnificent exhibitions of powers and capacities that have ever been seen.

With such thoughts in mind as to the original purpose and professed object of the Convention, we shall be in a fairer mood to face the question as to the fruits of practical service that have followed from the movement as a whole. And in seeking to estimate these results we shall discover, that the years of the Convention can fairly be divided into three stages, according as the teaching began to comprise new aspects of what is after all only one great whole of Christian doctrine.

In the earliest years, perhaps most definitely in the first eight or ten, of the Convention meetings at Keswick, the chief emphasis was placed upon the great matter of deliverance from the power of besetting sin, the attainment of victory in the little conflicts of everyday life and conduct, by the power of Christ accepted in the heart by faith. The keynote of the earliest message was this: that there is in Christ not only a release and deliverance from the penalty and future punishment of sins past, but that there is also in Him an ever present power to keep from the

recurring attacks of those sins ; and that that power is as much to be appropriated by our faith as was the first boon of pardon for all the past. ‘Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ : that was the glad message that came with such fresh force to multitudes of consciously pardoned and reconciled souls in those early years. Closely connected with this aspect and message of the full Gospel came also the instant corollary of a whole-hearted consecration of the redeemed life to God. ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.’ These two thoughts formed the right and left hand of the subject ; they were the negative and positive of the message : cleansing and consecration, deliverance and dedication.

The consequence and fruit of such a message were at once apparent, and the result exactly corresponded to the cause.

In those early years there were many testimonies of a practical deliverance from the power of besetting sin, a constant and lasting blessing found in the keeping power of Christ, which formed so new and blessed an experience, that many spoke of it as a 'second conversion.' Though that phrase was never adopted by the speakers, nor given any official approval, yet it was one quite natural under the circumstances, especially in view of the exactly similar way in which the two blessings came to be received. These Christian people knew quite well, that it was by simple faith in Christ, when their own powers and efforts had proved worthless, that the blessing of pardon and peace had been bestowed upon them ; and now it was a real repetition of the same steps that brought them this further blessing. Again they were shown that their own powers and efforts had failed, and always would fail, to win them deliverance from the powers of besetting sins, just as they had failed for attaining pardon. Again they were shown that in

Christ and in Him alone there lies the secret of deliverance and victory, even as in Him lay the power to forgive. Again they were told to commit their case unto the Lord, and that, trusting in Him, the deliverance would be theirs, even as the pardon had been received years before. No wonder then, that with so much alike in the need, in the Deliverer, and in the condition of faith, they should express the blessing received as a 'second conversion,' or more often a 'second blessing.' It was no denial that many more blessings might follow, but only a thankful confession of the very marked and real change effected by this grace of God.

With this earliest aspect of the work, and as the immediate consequence of a true definition of sin, came also the fruit of amendment for wrong done to others, that most practical outcome of a real and living repentance, and the strongest assurance of a determined separation from evil. All these consequences of the Convention were among the most frequent evidences of its practical bearing on

everyday life ; and where such fruits were apparent there could be no doubt of the reality and God-given character of the work. Judging by a good many cases which I have known personally, these three early fruits of the Convention must have very largely influenced the lives of those who attended. Among the most common signs were to be noted the strong conviction of sin, and the vivid recollection of old and half-forgotten and never honestly righted faults of bygone days. Many a soul, coming to seek and pray for this deliverance from the power of sin of which men were speaking, found their prayers interrupted by the rising of such old errors of former days ; nor could they make any progress, nor get any effectual result from their prayers, until they had put those old things right, and made amends for what they had left unconfessed and uncorrected in their former dealings with others. So often did such an effect of the Convention come before my personal knowledge in the earlier days, that I found it the very best

and shortest answer to objectors, who doubted whether this work were really a spiritual and Scriptural movement. I was wont to say, that as long as the constant symptoms of the blessing there sought were a fresh sensitiveness of conscience and a deeper conviction of the sinfulness of sin, as long as it was constantly leading in the very first steps to a frank confession and honest amendment to those who had been in any way wronged by the one who was seeking blessing, then I was sure such must indeed be the work of God's Holy Spirit. With this honest dealing with regard to their old faults there came also the wholehearted surrender of themselves to God, for the learning of His will and the doing of His work ; which in very many cases led to an increased activity of service, apparent enough in each single person, but difficult to tabulate in a total of such effects. Then, and most apparent to their immediate surroundings, came so often the conquest of tempers that had marred the Christian testimony of former days. This was a

proof which could be seen and known of all, and was the best evidence in those days to others who inquired or doubted about the work.

One such case may serve as an example for many. Mr. Moody was one day talking to a friend of mine, and asking him about the meaning of Keswick. Another friend sitting with them broke in with a word of ridicule about Keswick, when Mr. Moody told this remarkable story in defence of the Convention which he had never attended, and in explanation of his desire to know more about it. 'On one of my previous visits to this country I found in a certain town, on the Committee that was arranging my meetings, a leading worker, who was the most cantankerous Christian that I ever met. At my next visit, some years later, I found this man so altered and so full of the love of God, that I at once asked another friend what had happened to him. The friend said, "He has been to Keswick." Then I said, "I only wish all other Christians would go to Keswick too, and get their

hearts filled in the same way with the love of God." Such a testimony is worth much, for it exactly expresses the result at which the Convention speakers aimed, shows how apparently it had been attained in this case, and how so keen an observer as Mr. Moody was impressed by the result and convinced of the reality of the work.

Now where such an effect was a commonly sought and found experience, it could not fail to affect the lives in other ways, besides that of deliverance from besetting sins. Where the consecration of the whole being to God was a real and definite act, intended to bring the life into closer conformity to the revealed will and Word of God, there was bound to be a change in the active side of life, as well as in the inner realm of experience. And this became evident in what I have suggested as forming the second stage of the teaching at the Convention, and which became more prominent in the next part of its existence, from the end of the first eight or ten years. This time the

message, addressed very largely to those who had made real proof and experience of the reality of the earlier message, took the form of enforcing the ever present power of the Holy Spirit, as the great Enabler and Strengthenener for all the service to which a soul is called. As the first lesson was that of casting the burden of besetting sins on the Lord, so this next stage rather enforced the casting the burden of service upon Him, and seeking to do and serve, not in our own power but in His. The question was forced upon those who were proving His power to keep, whether this was to be all He meant to do ; and at once it became apparent that the vessel was to be cleansed and kept clean, solely in order that it might always be ready for the Master's use. Capacity for service began to be pressed upon all hearers as the work of the Holy Spirit, as our Lord had promised in his last discourse to His disciples after the Supper. The Holy Spirit was to teach all things, was to witness of Christ, was to show the things of Christ, was to

enable to witness for Him to the world. The great lesson of Pentecost, the promise of the Father, was seen to have an ever fresh application to the Christian life, and to be as true a promise to-day as at the first.

One striking testimony as to the way in which this teaching passed from the inner experience to the outer activities was given in my hearing on one occasion at a local Convention. A second speaker at one of the meetings had failed to arrive, and it was suggested that any on the platform might give their witness to the truths that were being taught. A senior clergyman rose and told the following story. He said that the responsibilities of his parish some time before began so to press upon him, and the difficulties of fully meeting them so weighed upon him, that he was in danger of breaking down under the strain. Night and day the burden of souls lay upon his heart, and his own inability effectually to bring home the Gospel to them all oppressed him, till he thought he would very soon succumb

altogether and die. He was one day in much depression, and was praying for help in his helplessness, when the text flashed into his mind, 'Casting all your care upon Him.' Suddenly he saw, that that must mean the care and burden of his parish, as it had meant the burden of his sins many years before. There and then he committed his parish and its burdens unto the Lord, and, as he added in closing his remarks, 'I have never borne that burden since.' When I add that he was an indefatigable worker, a remarkable visitor, and a capable missionary, it will be seen that this 'Keswick blessing' meant no small power for service and real capacity for Christian work. That text, and the kindred one, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' are among those frequently referred to as being the Word by which the truth of deliverance and power was communicated to the soul.

If we were to take Purity as the keynote of the earlier stage, we may take Power as that of the second, and in the very order of the disciples' experience.

They had been in communion with their Master during His earthly ministry, learning to grow like Him and to develop a character such as He desired. Now that He was leaving them to carry on His work, their great need was power to do this fitly. Here, then, came the great doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

It is not a little significant of this gradual progress of the work and teaching, that the objections made by people who opposed but never attended the Convention changed perceptibly. In those earlier days it was sometimes objected that the teachers did not give proper prominence and honour to the Holy Spirit, because they so strongly emphasized the keeping and delivering power of the risen Saviour. But when the importance of the power and working of the Holy Spirit came to be enforced, the objection altered, and faulty teaching about the Spirit was one of the points of the opposing charge. It was not a change in any way officially planned—indeed, there was from the very beginning of the movement a remarkable

absence of planning and organizing about the work ; but simply that all who spoke came habitually with whatever of God's Word was most fresh upon their hearts and minds, and so the change was unperceived and natural, just like the growth of a healthy child.

Such a step forward very soon resulted in the third of these stages which I have suggested as marking the work. And that last stage was indeed the one, where theory and doctrine and personal experience passed into activities which are somewhat more within the reach of figures for tabulating. It was but the logical outcome of the earlier steps. If these had led to a closer conformity to the character which Christ desired His disciples to show, if they had sent the obedient hearer to the Source of all strength and fitness for service, then how and where was that service to be rendered ? As this question came to be formulated, there sprang up before the Convention, quite unexpectedly and without human design, the great vista of an unevangelized world,

and the reality of the Lord's command that His Gospel was to be sent to the uttermost parts of the earth. The story of how this aspect of Keswick came into prominence is one of the most remarkable of the many striking stories of that Convention. It is most interestingly given in Mr. Stock's *History of the Church Missionary Society*, from which the following details are mainly taken. He writes that Mr. Reginald Radcliffe was the instrument through whom the missionary movement was really initiated at Keswick. He had for some time failed to persuade the leaders of the Convention to allow a missionary meeting to be held there. Mr. Bowker declared that it would result in the secretaries of societies coming down to raise money. 'No,' he said ; 'we come here to meet with God and to receive His Word ; and this must not be mixed up with missionary collections.'

At length, in 1886 and 1887, he consented to lend the Convention tent to Mr. Radcliffe for a meeting on the Saturday.

In the latter year Mr. Webb-Peploe attended and spoke ; and that meeting proved a memorable epoch in modern missionary history. Mr. Longley Hall, of the C.M.S. Palestine Mission, had 'drawn a bow at a venture.' He had sent direct to Mr. Bowker, without any consultation with the society, an appeal for women missionaries for the Holy Land. 'Are there not Christian ladies with private means,' he wrote, 'who are attending this Convention, and who could come out here and work among the Moslem women? Cannot ten come this year?' That appeal was referred to at Mr. Radcliffe's meeting ; God used it to touch many hearts, and offers of personal service flowed in. The first was from Miss Vidal, daughter of the first Bishop of Sierra Leone ; the second from Miss Armstrong, daughter of a C.M.S. missionary in Guiana fifty years before ; also more general offers. This response was one of the chief factors of leading the C.M.S. to sanction the habitual acceptance of suitable unmarried ladies for missionary

work, which in earlier years they had several times deliberately declined to do. In the next eight years—1887 to 1894—the names of no less than 214 women were added to the roll. To have such an effect on missionary methods directly traced to the Convention is the first of a long series of missionary results, which appear as the most prominent and most easily demonstrated fruits in practical service that have flowed from the movement.

Here, again, we are faced with the natural condition of things that no exact or precise record is attainable as to the numbers of missionary offers of service that are directly the fruit of Keswick. It is not a matter that would be tabulated by the secretaries of any missionary society, and definite statistics are therefore not available. Two societies, to the secretaries of which I wrote, asking if they could give me an approximate estimate of the number of candidates offering to them, who traced their purpose directly to Keswick, have replied in these terms.

‘I have frequently in interviews with candidates found that their decision to offer themselves for foreign service is directly traceable to Keswick, and not infrequently there is an indirect connexion. I mean that the candidate has been led at Keswick into a fuller realization of what Christ’s claims are upon us, and this has resulted soon afterwards in the thought of missionary service being pressed upon their conscience. It is exceedingly difficult to judge of the proportion of cases in which the missionary call has come through Keswick, but taking men and women together, I should think that between 5 and 10 per cent. of offers of service may be directly traced to the Convention; and that this direct connexion is more frequent among our women than our men candidates. Perhaps I ought to add, with regard to the indirect connexion between Keswick and offers of service, that one comes across candidates from time to time whose way has been made clear by the fact that their parents have been influenced through Keswick

Convention to withdraw their opposition.' The other secretary wrote : 'It is most difficult to give precise figures, but as far as we can trace, there are very few of those who offer to us who trace their call directly to Keswick. I have made inquiries both with regard to men and women, and the heads of departments both say not more than 5 per cent., if as many. Many have obtained much help and spiritual blessing while they are in training through attending the Convention ; but I can quite understand, that is a different matter.'

Quite in accord with this last sentence is the increasingly large attendance of accepted candidates, and missionaries on furlough, who are every year found at the Convention. These are to be reckoned by the hundred, and the number of two hundred attending one year has long since been surpassed. The further fact that missionaries are now frequently found organizing such conventions abroad, for the benefit and spiritual refreshment of their fellow workers, is further proof how

they ever find such meetings a power and a strength in their work. The number of foreign missionaries who express their appreciation of the annual report of the Convention, and the help that it often brings them, is another indication of the close connexion between the truths there taught and efficiency in Christian enterprise.

This unforeseen and unexpected development of missionary enthusiasm which has sprung from the Keswick Convention during these later years is after all the most natural outcome of the line of teaching there adopted. The fact that this end was not foreseen at the first makes it all the more directly the manifest work of the Lord, leading His own by a way that they know not ; and proving again that the pathway of obedience is the only way to useful and successful service. Whether it was conscious or not as a method of work, certain it is that this same order of teaching was followed in the influence exerted by the 'Cambridge Seven,' who gave themselves to the work in the China Inland Mission in 1884.

When some of the 'Seven' were taking meetings in other places and in the northern universities, their whole line of teaching was the call of God to a consecrated life; leaving the missionary outcome to be seen as a natural conclusion, without laying any stress upon it in their addresses. Deep spirituality marked most emphatically the densely crowded meetings in different places at which these seven men said farewell. They told, modestly and yet fearlessly, of the Lord's goodness to them, and of the joy of serving Him; and they appealed to young men, not for their mission, but for their divine Master.

Now the dates connected with the going out of the 'Cambridge Seven' are significant as to the influence of Keswick on the missionary call. The mission of Mr. Moody in Cambridge was held in the autumn of 1882. Then, as Mr. Stock records in his *History of the Church Missionary Society*, came the next step: 'It was to follow up Moody's work by leading the men who had been brought to the point of yielding them-

selves to Christ on to a fuller Christian life that, early in 1883, Mr. Webb-Peploe, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. C. A. Fox, and Mr. Bowker, who had by that time become known as "the Keswick men," held the first Convention at Cambridge on "Keswick lines." There were grave doubts, on the part of the Evangelical clergy at Cambridge, as to the perfect soundness and wisdom of the teaching they would give; but to a large extent these doubts were dispelled when they came. And upon the whole, it was a period big with blessings that have since fallen upon many English parishes, upon the Colonies, and upon Africa, India, China, and Japan.' One year later the 'Seven' offered for the work in China, and the same influence led many others to follow in the same line of conversion, consecration, and acceptance of the missionary call for their life's service.

As to the future of the influence of Keswick it is not easy to speak. But as it is more and more accepted as being a movement in accordance with the Word

and mind of God, and is seen to be manifestly resulting in a wider obedience to the great missionary call of the Master, it can only be hoped that it will affect the whole living Church with its methods and results. That the world is meant by the Lord to be evangelized by the Church, and that hitherto that purpose has been largely ignored, is equally evident to every student of the foreign mission cause. What is to be done to arouse a response worthy of the Master and His purposes of blessing? Nothing more effective for the end in view can be done, than the wider and ever wider diffusion of the order of the divine call. First to Conversion, the personal turning to God and finding in Him the salvation of the soul through the finished work of Christ. Next the consequent demand that every converted soul shall seek and find, equally by the power of God and through faith in Christ, the keeping of the soul from the power of evil. Then, that the soul, kept and pardoned, should hear and respond to the call to

consecration and surrender of itself to the will of God. And last, that that will should be sought out of His Word, and obeyed in the life, by every real child of God and faithful disciple of Christ.

No fitter words can close this study of the way and working of the truth, than the following from the pen of Mr. Hudson Taylor, the director of the China Inland Mission : ‘In the study of the divine Word I learned that, to obtain successful labourers, not elaborate appeals for help, but first, earnest prayer to God to thrust forth labourers, and second, *the deepening of the spiritual life of the Church*, so that men should be unable to stay at home, were what was needed.’

THE END

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